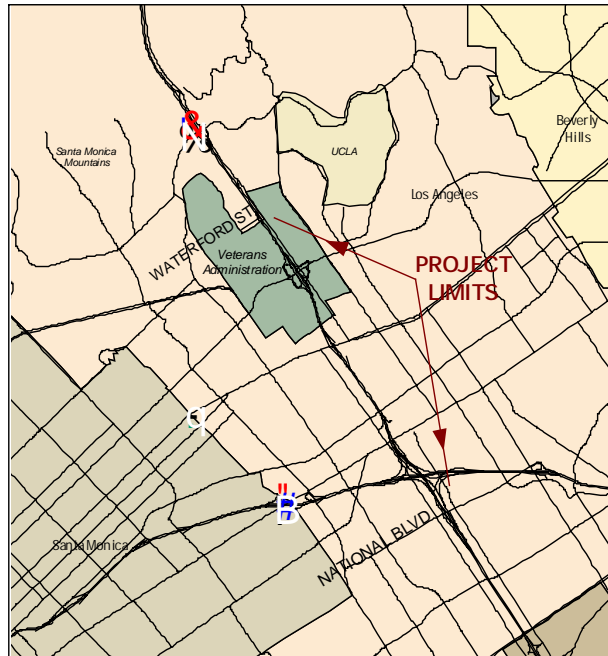


DRAFT
Initial Study/Environmental Assessment



Add High Occupancy Vehicle Lane and Auxiliary Lanes
To Southbound Interstate 405
From Interstate 10 to Waterford Street
07-LA-405
KP 47.0/51.6 (PM 29.2/32.1)

Los Angeles, California

Federal Highway Administration
California Department of Transportation



April 2001

SCH # _____

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**DRAFT
INITIAL STUDY/
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

Submitted Pursuant to: 42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(C)

**U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration
and
State of California
Department of Transportation**

March 8, 2001

Date of Approval

Original Signed By

RONALD J. KOSINSKI
Acting Division Chief
California Department of Transportation

April 6, 2001

Date of Approval

Original Signed By

MICHAEL G. RITCHIE
Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration

NEGATIVE DECLARATION

Pursuant to: Division 13, Public Resources Code

Description

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) proposes to improve the flow of traffic on southbound I-405 by providing increased traffic capacity from 0.5 km (0.3 miles) south of I-10 to Waterford Street. The existing weaving conditions on the mainline will be improved by closing the Waterford Street on-ramp, and by adding approximately 1.5 km (0.9 miles) of auxiliary lanes between existing on- and off-ramps within the 4.6 km (2.9 mile) project limits. In addition, a High Occupancy Vehicle lane is proposed to provide continuity for the southbound HOV lane on the entire I-405 corridor in the Los Angeles County.

Determination

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) has prepared an Initial Study. On the basis of this study it is determined that the proposed action will not have a significant effect upon the environment for the following reasons:

1. the proposed project will not significantly affect topography, seismic exposure, floodplains, wetlands, or water quality;
2. the proposed project will not significantly affect natural vegetation, sensitive, endangered, or threatened plant or animal species, or agriculture;
3. the proposed project will not significantly affect solid waste or other consumption of energy and natural resources;
4. the proposed project may uncover hazardous waste in the form of lead-contaminated soils, but reuse and/or disposal of the soil will be in conformance with the California Department of Toxic Substances Control regulations;
5. the proposed project will promote improved regional air quality;
6. the proposed project may affect noise levels, but soundwalls will be implemented to attenuate noise at qualifying areas;
7. the proposed project will not significantly affect land use, public facilities, or other socioeconomic features;
8. the proposed project will not significantly affect cultural resources, scenic resources, aesthetics, open space, or parklands.
9. the proposed project may require the acquisition of commercial property, but adequate compensation will be provided for those acquisitions.

RONALD J. KOSINSKI
Acting Division Chief
District 7
California Department of Transportation

Date

SUMMARY

The United States National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, also known as NEPA, was the first legislation to require environmental impact assessments to be carried out. The purpose of this law is to establish a national policy on the protection and restoration of environmental quality, to set up the Council on Environmental Quality to review environmental programs and progress, and to advise the President on these matters. One year later, California became the first state to enact a law modeled after NEPA. It is entitled the California Environmental Quality Act. CEQA's main objectives are to disclose significant environmental effects of proposed activities to decision makers and the public, to require agencies to avoid or reduce environmental effects, to encourage interagency coordination in the review of projects, and to enhance public participation in the planning process.

The project proposed in this document affects an interstate freeway within California; therefore it is subject to both federal and state environmental laws. Since the proposed project does not fall under a list of Categorical Excluded or Exempt projects, an Initial Study (IS) for CEQA, and an Environmental Assessment (EA) for NEPA has been prepared concurrently. The purpose of the IS/EA is to determine whether an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for CEQA and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for NEPA is necessary. If the IS/EA concludes that the project, without mitigation, may have a significant effect on the environment, an EIR/EIS should be prepared. Otherwise, a Negative Declaration for CEQA and Finding of No Significant Impact for NEPA may be prepared.

In this document, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) proposes to improve traffic flow and safety on southbound Interstate 405 in the City of Los Angeles between Interstate 10 to Waterford Street. This area experiences extreme congestion and higher than average accident rates during peak travel hours. These conditions are expected to worsen as population growth in the Los Angeles area continues. In order to alleviate congestion and reduce accident rates, Caltrans proposes to increase the freeway's capacity and safety by adding one High Occupancy Vehicle lane for cars with two or more passengers, auxiliary lanes between the existing on- and off-ramps, and permanently closing the Waterford Street on-ramp.

Currently, there are two design options for the Wilshire Boulevard/I-405 interchange, and two for the Olympic Boulevard overpass. The first Wilshire option proposes to construct an auxiliary lane on the freeway between the on-ramp from westbound Wilshire and the off-ramp to eastbound Wilshire to minimize weaving. The second option for the Wilshire Blvd./I-405 interchange is to consolidate the ramps by closing the southbound loop off-ramp to eastbound Wilshire, and widening the westbound off-ramp to accommodate the redirected traffic. The Wilshire Blvd. intersection will be signalized to allow access to both directions of Wilshire from the widened off-ramp. Right-of-way acquisition would be required for the widened ramp. For the Olympic Blvd. off-ramp, it is proposed to either construct a retaining wall along the ramp, or construct a cantilever structure over the existing retaining wall. The first option would require right-of-way acquisition.

The final selection of alternatives will not be made until all impacts have been considered and comments from the public have been received.

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1. PURPOSE AND NEED FOR ACTION

1.1 Introduction

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) proposes to improve traffic conditions and reduce accident rates on Interstate 405 in the City of Los Angeles in Los Angeles County (Figure 1-1). The proposed project will widen the existing facility to add a lane for High Occupancy Vehicles (HOV) and auxiliary lanes between the existing on- and off-ramps from Waterford Street to 0.5 km south of Interstate 10 (Figure 1-2). Interregional Transportation Improvement Program (ITIP) will fund the design portion of this project, and construction capital and construction support will be funded through the Governor's Traffic Congestion Relief Plan and the Regional Transportation Improvement Program.

The Transportation Facility

Interstate 405 (I-405), or the San Diego Freeway, is a north-south traversing route that is classified as an interstate/interregional, urban freeway. I-405 is part of the National Highway System and serves as a major access route for the coastal communities in the Los Angeles area. This heavily traveled highway originates at Route 5 in Orange County in the City of Irvine, and terminates at Route 5 in the Los Angeles community of Mission Hills. I-10 intersects with I-405 only a few miles from its western terminus in the City of Santa Monica.

The segment of the San Diego Freeway within the project limits was originally constructed on a fill section between 1958 and 1963. It was an eight-lane facility consisting of four 3.66 meter (12 ft) lanes in each direction, 2.44 to 3.05 meter (8 to 10 ft) outside shoulders and a 6.71 meter (22 ft) median. A re-striping project in 1995 reduced the lane widths to a non-standard 3.35 meters (11 ft), and the median was used to accommodate the addition of two mixed flow lanes and a 1.22 meter (4 ft) non-standard half median. After the widening, the outside shoulder remained unchanged. The other major modification to this segment has been the construction of a concrete barrier in the median. On southbound I-405 within the project limits there are five undercrossing structures, eight ramps and one auxiliary lane between the southbound I-405 on-ramp from eastbound Wilshire Boulevard and the southbound off-ramp to Santa Monica Boulevard.

Figure 1-1 – Location Map

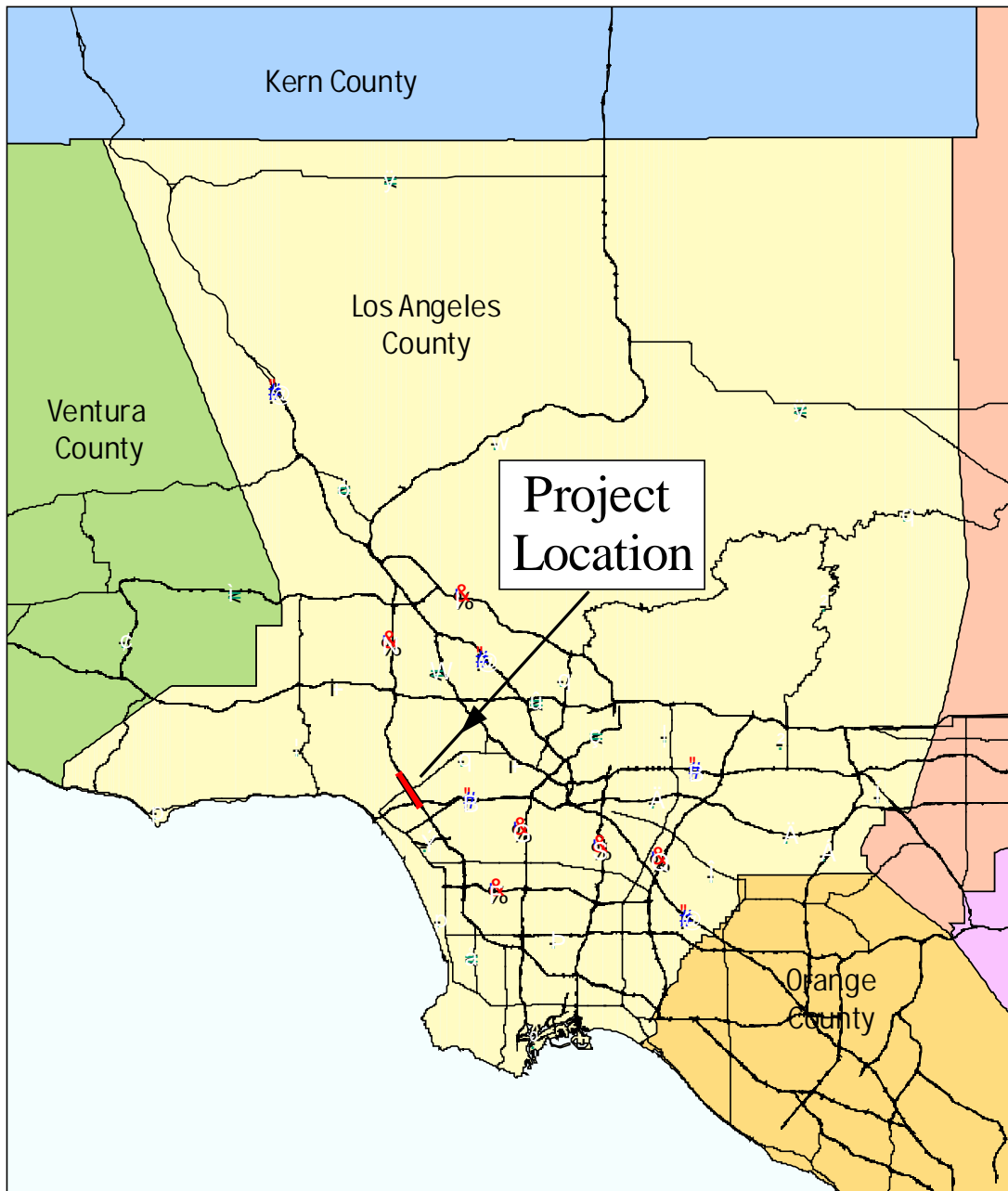
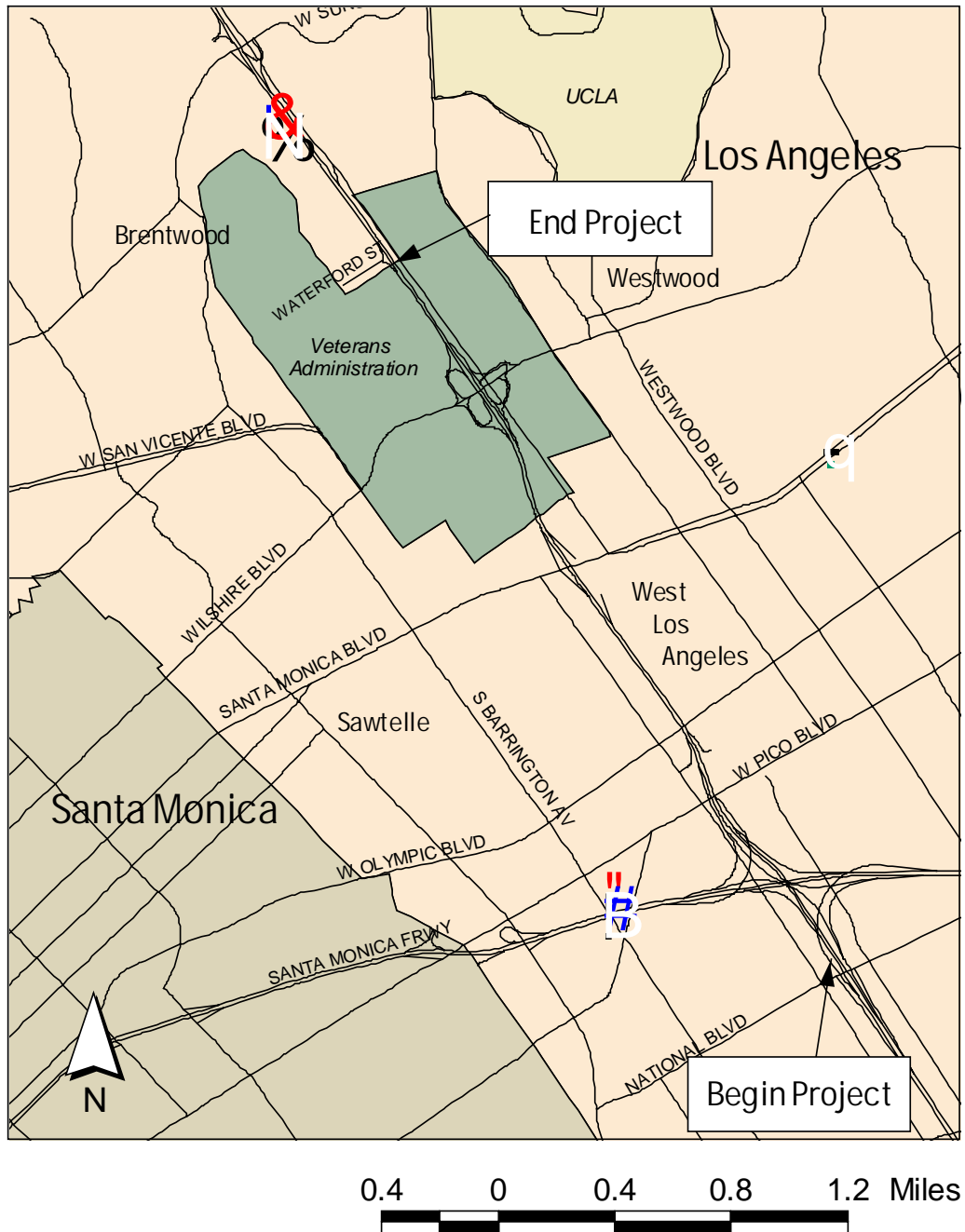


Figure 1-2 – Vicinity Map



1.2 Purpose and Need for Project

The primary purpose of the proposed project is to improve the flow of traffic on southbound I-405 between National Boulevard and Waterford Street. The addition of an HOV lane would increase traffic capacity as well as encourage ride sharing. A HOV project at the northerly terminus of this proposed project is under construction and another HOV project, at the southerly terminus of this project is in the Project Report stage. This project would fill in the only remaining HOV gap on the southbound San Diego Freeway, providing a continuous system for buses, vanpools, and vehicles carrying a minimum of two passengers.

The proposed project is of the highest priority in the Southern California Traffic Operations Program Strategies (TOPS) plan. The TOPS plan's primary objective is to optimize the carrying capacity of the freeway network. It has also been listed in Governor Gray Davis' Traffic Congestion Relief Plan for Los Angeles. The need for new strategies for operational improvements came from the fact that congestion on the network has grown by approximately 40% since 1990¹.

The San Diego Freeway is one of the busiest freeways in the nation, with the I-405/I-10 interchange being rated the nation's worst bottleneck by the American Highway Users Alliance in November 1999.² Not only is this section of the freeway heavily traveled by commuters, but also by motorists traveling to and from many trip generators such as the University of California, Los Angeles/Westwood, Century City, the Getty Center, Santa Monica and Los Angeles International Airport. Caltrans estimates that the 11-mile segment of I-405 between I-10 and US-101 experiences congestion for almost five hours every weekday afternoon.

Traffic congestion is expected to continue increasing if no improvements are made to the corridor. By the year 2020 Southern California (Los Angeles, San Bernardino, Riverside, Imperial, Orange, and Ventura Counties) will be home to 6.7 million additional people, an increase of 43%. At the same time, employment is projected to grow by 61%, bringing the total number of jobs in the region to 10.6 million by the year 2020. Job growth, however, is not forecasted to take place in the same areas where the greatest population growth is expected. The imbalance between jobs and housing will worsen, resulting in more people commuting and longer commutes to work.³

According to state law, the goal of HOV lanes is twofold: reduce congestion and improve air quality. State law declares that HOV lanes are "to stimulate and encourage the development of ways and means of relieving traffic congestion on California highways and, at the same time, to encourage individual citizens to pool their vehicular resources and thereby conserve fuel and lessen emission of air pollutants." State and federal law

¹ Traffic Analysis Report, Ashraf W. Hanna, Caltrans Project Engineer, February 2000.

² American Highway Users Alliance, Unclogging America's Arteries: Prescriptions for Healthier Highways, National Press Club: Washington D.C., November 1999.

³ Southern California Association of Governments, 98 Regional Transportation Plan, www.scag.ca.gov, April 16, 1998.

also encourage the usage of buses on HOV lanes as a way to carry more people, therefore reducing vehicle miles traveled.

Caltrans has defined the goal of HOV lanes more specifically as follows:

- Increase the people-moving capacity of the freeway system.
- Reduce overall vehicular congestion and motorist delay by encouraging greater HOV use through carpooling.
- Provide time and commute cost savings to the users of HOV lanes.
- Increase overall efficiency of the system by allowing HOVs to bypass congestion on lanes designed for their use.
- Improve air quality by decreasing vehicular emissions.⁴

1.3 Traffic and Accident Conditions

This segment of the San Diego Freeway suffers from extreme congestion and high accident rates during peak traffic hours. In the build year, 2005, it is estimated that the freeway within the project limits will operate at a Level of Service (LOS) ranging from “E” to “F2” during the peak hour, which is below Caltrans target LOS urban areas (C-E).⁵ See Table 1-1 for LOS interpretations.

The HOV lane will alleviate congestion by adding to the capacity in this segment of I-405. The proposed auxiliary lane improvement, which provides an additional lane between existing on- and off-ramps, is expected to improve the weaving conditions along the mainline which occurs between closely spaced on- and off-ramps. If the proposed improvements are not made, in the year 2025 it is estimated that the LOS will deteriorate to F3 at the most congested point, causing a breakdown in vehicular flow for two to three hours. Tables 1-2 and 1-3 illustrate the projected freeway operation with and without the proposed project.

⁴ Legislative Analyst’s Office, HOV Lanes in California: Are They Achieving Their Goals?, www.lao.ca.gov, January 7, 2000.

⁵ Caltrans Highway Design Manual, Chapter 100, Topic 102, July 1995.

Table 1-1 – Level of Service (LOS) Criteria⁶

Level of Service (LOS)	Condition
A	Excellent – Free flow, unimpeded ability to maneuver within the traffic stream, effects of incidents or point breakdowns are easily absorbed at this level
B	Very Good – Reasonably free flow, ability to maneuver within the traffic stream is only slightly restricted, effects of minor incidents are still easily absorbed
C	Good – Freedom to maneuver is noticeably restricted, lane changes require more care and vigilance, queues form behind any significant blockage
D	Fair – Density begins to increase somewhat more quickly, minor incidents can be expected to create queuing because there is little space to absorb disruptions
E	Capacity – Virtually no usable gaps in the traffic stream, maneuverability within the traffic stream is extremely limited
F	Forced Flow – Breakdown in vehicular flow, queues form behind traffic incidents or weaving areas <i>Caltrans rates LOS F by the length of time that congestion will be experienced at a certain point.</i>
F-0	15 minutes to 1 hour of congestion
F-1	1 to 2 hours of congestion
F-2	2 to 3 hours of congestion
F-3	3 hours or more of congestion

⁶ National Research Council Transportation Research Board, Highway Capacity Manual, Washing

Table 1-2 – Freeway Operational Analysis (2005)

2005													
ALTERNATIVE 1 – No Build													
		Peak Hour Volume											
		AM						PM					
		Mixed Flow			HOV			Mixed Flow			HOV		
Post Mile	MAINLINE LOCATION	Volume	V/C	LOS	Volume	V/C	LOS	Volume	V/C	LOS	Volume	V/C	LOS
33.29 to 33.00	SUNSET BLVD.	9675	1.344	F2				8039	1.117	F1			
33.00 to 31.54	WILSHIRE BLVD.	9749	1.083	F1				7842	0.871	E			
31.54 to 30.86	SANTA MONICA BLVD.	9830	1.092	F1				8590	0.954	E			
30.66 to 30.18	OLYMPIC BLVD./ PICO	9935	1.104	F1				8789	0.977	E			
30.18 to 29.54	SANTA MONICA FWY. (I-10)	9047	1.005	F0				8862	0.985	E			
ALTERNATIVE 2 – Add HOV & Axlry. Lanes +													
WILSHIRE OPTION A – Provide Auxiliary Lane between Loop Ramps													
		AM						PM					
		Mixed Flow			HOV			Mixed Flow			HOV		
Post Mile	MAINLINE LOCATION	Volume	V/C	LOS	Volume	V/C	LOS	Volume	V/C	LOS	Volume	V/C	LOS
33.29 to 33.00	SUNSET BLVD.	8141	1.131	F1	1534	0.807	D	6666	0.926	E	1373	0.723	D
33.00 to 31.54	WILSHIRE BLVD.	8211	0.912	E	1534	0.807	D	6469	0.719	D	1373	0.723	D
31.54 to 30.86	SANTA MONICA BLVD.	8413	0.779	D	1414	0.744	D	7310	0.677	C	1280	0.674	C
30.66 to 30.18	OLYMPIC BLVD./ PICO	8633	0.799	D	1300	0.684	C	7596	0.703	C	1193	0.628	C
30.18 to 29.54	SANTA MONICA FWY. (I-10)	9046	1.005	F0	1025	0.539	C	8862	0.985	E	1053	0.554	C
ALTERNATIVE 2 – Add HOV & Axlry. Lanes +													
WILSHIRE OPTION B – Consolidate Wilshire Blvd. Off-ramps													
		AM						PM					
		Mixed Flow			HOV			Mixed Flow			HOV		
Post Mile	MAINLINE LOCATION	Volume	V/C	LOS	Volume	V/C	LOS	Volume	V/C	LOS	Volume	V/C	LOS
33.29 to 33.00	SUNSET BLVD.	8139	1.130	F1	1534	0.807	D	6665	0.926	E	1373	0.723	D
33.00 to 31.54	WILSHIRE BLVD.	8211	0.912	E	1534	0.807	D	6469	0.719	D	1373	0.723	D
31.54 to 30.86	SANTA MONICA BLVD.	7748	0.717	D	1290	0.679	C	6830	0.632	C	1177	0.619	C
30.66 to 30.18	OLYMPIC BLVD./ PICO	8463	0.784	D	1290	0.679	C	7613	0.705	C	1177	0.619	C
30.18 to 29.54	SANTA MONICA FWY. (I-10)	9046	1.005	F0	1017	0.535	C	8861	0.985	E	1040	0.547	C

Table 1-3 – Freeway Operational Analysis (2025)

2025													
ALTERNATIVE 1 – No Build													
		Peak Hour Volume											
Post Mile	MAINLINE LOCATION	AM						PM					
		Mixed Flow			HOV			Mixed Flow			HOV		
		Volume	V/C	LOS	Volume	V/C	LOS	Volume	V/C	LOS	Volume	V/C	LOS
33.29 to 33.00	SUNSET BLVD.	9423	1.309	F2				9998	1.389	F3			
33.00 to 31.54	WILSHIRE BLVD.	9623	1.069	F1				9759	1.084	F1			
31.54 to 30.86	SANTA MONICA BLVD.	9333	1.037	F0				10707	1.190	F1			
30.66 to 30.18	OLYMPIC BLVD./ PICO	10988	1.221	F2				10961	1.218	F2			
30.18 to 29.54	SANTA MONICA FWY. (I-10)	5710	0.634	C*				11064	1.229	F2			
*Improved LOS due to significant upstream congestion.													
ALTERNATIVE 2 – Add HOV & Axlry. Lanes +													
		Peak Hour Volume											
Post Mile	MAINLINE LOCATION	AM						PM					
		Mixed Flow			HOV			Mixed Flow			HOV		
		Volume	V/C	LOS	Volume	V/C	LOS	Volume	V/C	LOS	Volume	V/C	LOS
33.29 to 33.00	SUNSET BLVD.	8271	1.149	F1	1730	0.911	E	8292	1.152	F1	1706	0.898	E
33.00 to 31.54	WILSHIRE BLVD.	8778	0.975	E	1730	0.911	E	8052	0.895	E	1706	0.898	E
31.54 to 30.86	SANTA MONICA BLVD.	9120	0.844	D	1593	0.838	E	9117	0.844	D	1589	0.836	D
30.66 to 30.18	OLYMPIC BLVD./ PICO	9434	0.874	D	1464	0.771	D	9480	0.878	D	1480	0.779	D
30.18 to 29.54	SANTA MONICA FWY. (I-10)	10071	1.119	F1	1153	0.607	C	11062	1.229	F2	1307	0.688	D
		Peak Hour Volume											
Post Mile	MAINLINE LOCATION	AM						PM					
		Mixed Flow			HOV			Mixed Flow			HOV		
		Volume	V/C	LOS	Volume	V/C	LOS	Volume	V/C	LOS	Volume	V/C	LOS
33.29 to 33.00	SUNSET BLVD.	8271	1.149	F1	1730	0.911	E	8294	1.152	F1	1706	0.898	E
33.00 to 31.54	WILSHIRE BLVD.	8777	0.975	E	1730	0.911	E	9054	1.006	F0	1706	0.898	E
31.54 to 30.86	SANTA MONICA BLVD.	8397	0.778	D	1450	0.763	D	8516	0.789	D	1461	0.769	D
30.66 to 30.18	OLYMPIC BLVD./ PICO	9448	0.875	D	1450	0.763	D	9502	0.880	D	1461	0.769	D
30.18 to 29.54	SANTA MONICA FWY. (I-10)	10071	1.119	F1	1142	0.601	C	11065	1.229	F2	1290	0.679	D

The project area experienced a higher number of accidents than the statewide average during the study. A Traffic Accident Surveillance and Analysis System (TASAS) Selective Accident Retrieval report for April 1, 1997 to March 31, 2000 provided the accident history of the three-mile project area. A total of 857 accidents were reported that resulted in either death, injury, or property damage on southbound I-405 and its ramps. The accident rate was 1.79 accidents per million vehicle miles, which is slightly higher than the 1.33 statewide average for similar facilities.

Data showed that “rear-end” accidents were the predominant type of collisions (70.7%) and “sideswipe” accidents (15.5%) were the second most common type of collision that occurred on the mainline. These types of accidents are generally considered congestion-related incidents. “Stop and Go Traffic” was reported as an associated factor in 208 of the recorded accidents on the mainline. See Figure 1-4 for a depiction of types of accidents that occurred within the project area. The majority of all accidents occurred in clear, dry conditions, during afternoon peak hours (Figure 1-5). From this we can assume that the majority of the accidents are congestion-related incidents. According to the Office of Traffic Investigations, the number of “rear end” and “sideswipe” accidents can be expected to increase as congestion worsens. Congestion relief that would be achieved by implementing the proposed project is expected to lessen the occurrence of these types of accidents.

When comparing the number of accidents per million vehicles in Table 1-4, it is evident that problems are focused at certain segments of southbound I-405. The number of accidents that occur near Waterford St. and Wilshire are higher than average. These findings coincide with the Traffic Scoping Checklist’s summary of Existing Traffic Data Deficiencies. There is a non-standard merging distance at the westbound Wilshire Blvd. on-ramp, eastbound Wilshire Blvd. on-ramp, and Santa Monica Blvd. on-ramp (See Figure 1-3 for a depiction of the Wilshire Blvd. interchange). There is also non-standard diverging distance at the Wilshire Blvd. off-ramps, Santa Monica Blvd. off-ramp and Pico Blvd. off-ramp. The Wilshire Blvd. interchange also has a lack of weaving distance, which is exacerbated by the high traffic demand for its ramps. The addition of the proposed auxiliary lanes should improve the weaving conditions.

Another purpose of the proposed project is to reduce response time for emergency service vehicles in order to improve the efficiency of public safety and health service delivery. Response time of emergency service vehicles is generally increased by heavy congestion along primary travel routes such as I-405.

Figure 1-3 – Wilshire Boulevard Ramp Configuration

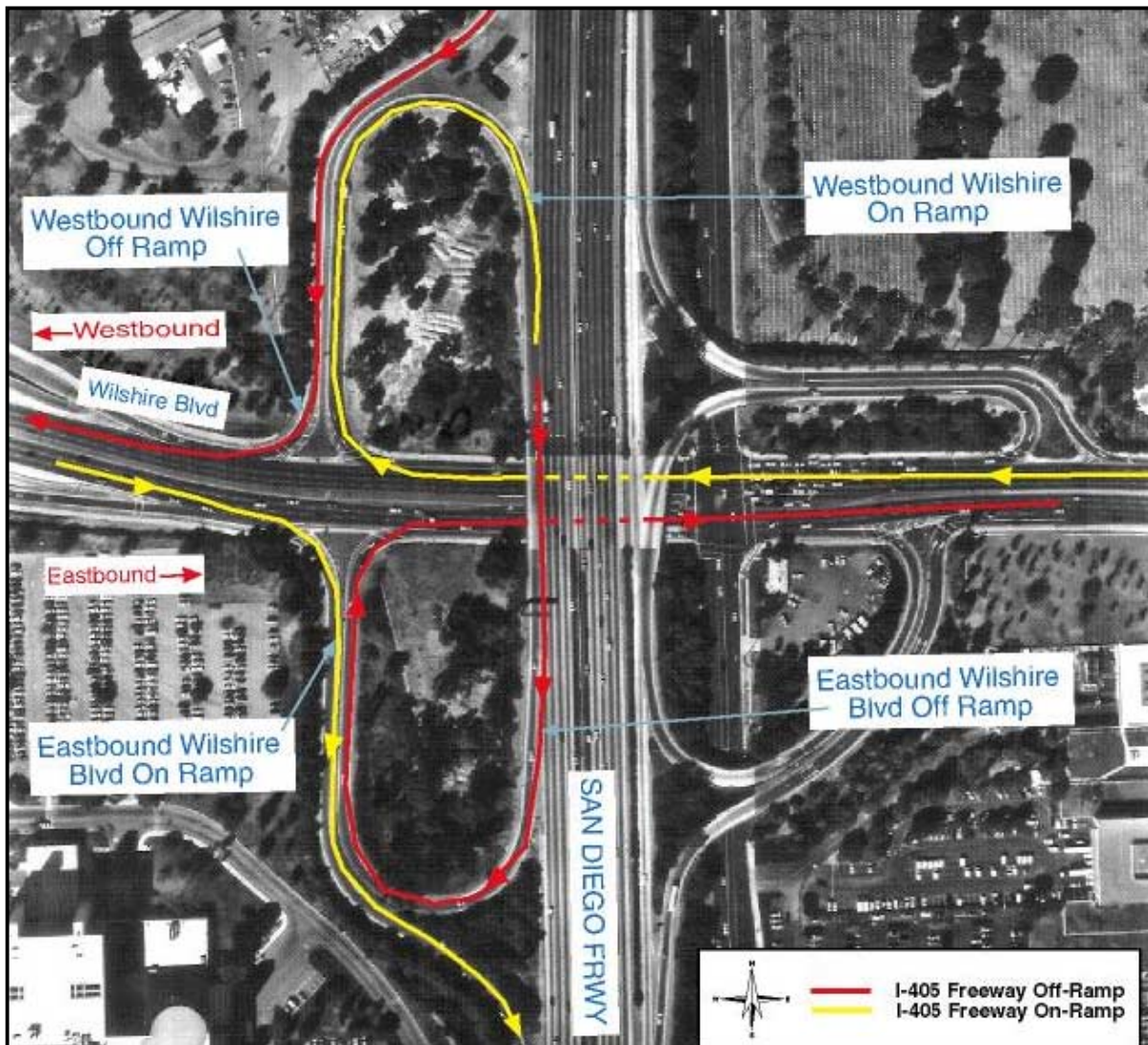


Figure 1-4 – Types of Accidents on the Mainline
 Traffic Accident Surveillance and Analysis System Accident Summary

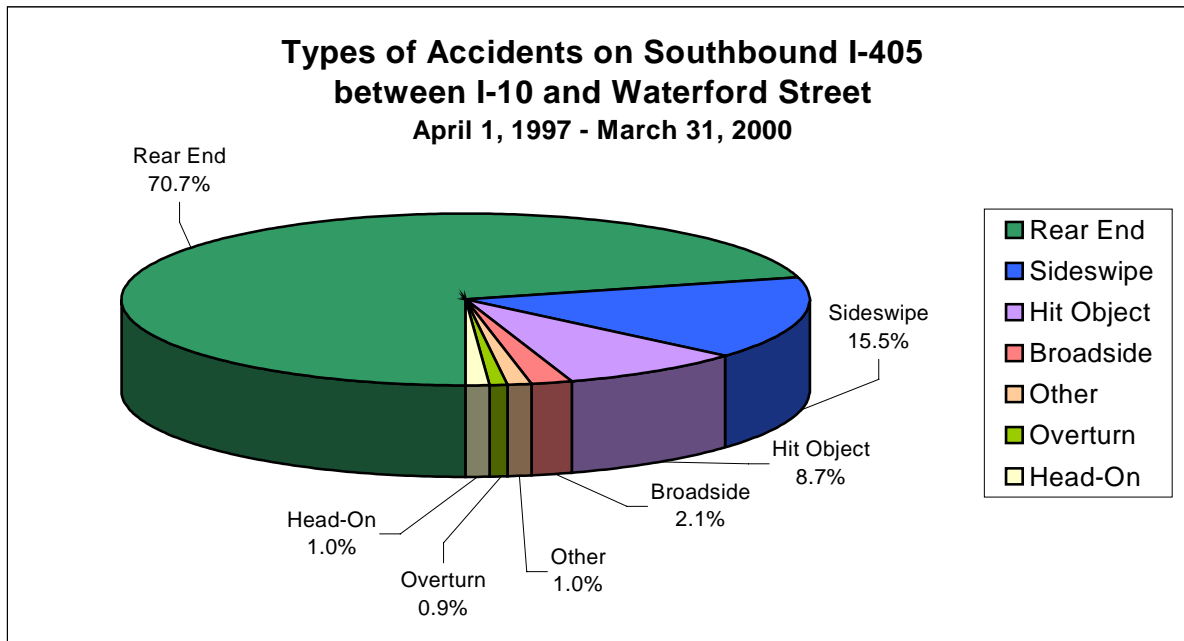


Figure 1-5 – Time of Accidents on the Mainline
 Traffic Accident Surveillance and Analysis System Accident Summary

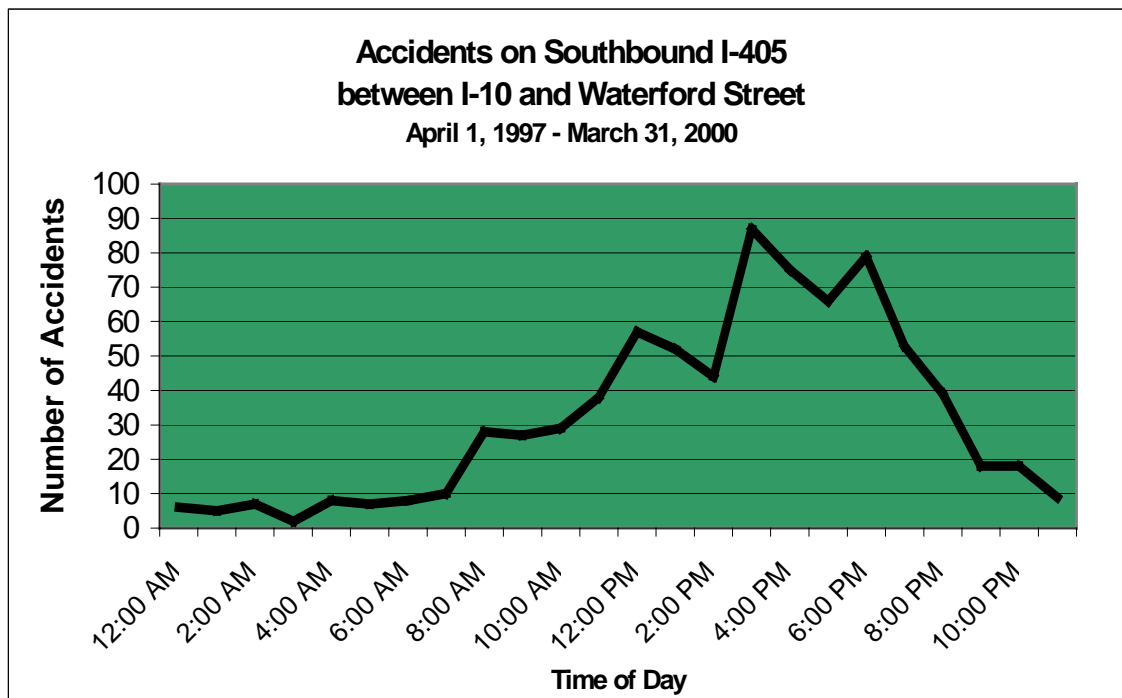


Table 1-4: Accident Rates on Ramps from April 1, 1997 to March 31, 2000

Accident Rate = Accidents Per Million Vehicles on Southbound I-405				
Post Mile	Southbound I-405 Ramps	Total Number of Accidents	Accident Rate in Project Area	Accident Rate Average**
32.078	On-ramp from Waterford St.	2	0.48	0.60
31.730	Off-ramp to westbound Wilshire	32	3.19*	0.90
31.646	On-ramp from westbound Wilshire	12	0.59	0.70
31.476	Off-ramp to eastbound Wilshire	13	1.13	1.25
31.384	On-ramp from eastbound Wilshire	11	0.75*	0.60
31.029	Off-ramp to Santa Monica Blvd	4	0.27	0.90
30.739	On-ramp from Santa Monica Blvd	9	0.38	0.45
30.136	Off-ramp to Olympic/Pico	1	0.08	1.15

Source: Traffic Accident Surveillance and Analysis System (TASAS) Table B, Caltrans District 7
 * Accident Rate in Project Area exceeds the Statewide Average Rate
 **Statewide average rates for similar facilities

1.4 Summary of Transportation Problems

Southbound I-405 currently experiences serious congestion while carrying substantial traffic volume through the study area during peak hours. Due to continued development, increasing population, and the fact that this is the only north-south traversing Interstate freeway that is west of Downtown Los Angeles, congestion should continue to increase. Travel demand and urban growth projections indicate that if no improvements are made, unacceptable levels of service will extend for longer periods of time and over larger sections during peak travel periods.

There is a critical need to eliminate existing and projected freeway congestion by improving the people-carrying capacity of this corridor and reducing the number of accidents caused by “stop-and-go” and “weaving” situations. These improvements should be cost effective and minimize impacts to the environment to the maximum feasible extent. Finally, improvements are needed to allow for continuity of the proposed interregional HOV system.

2. ALTERNATIVES

2.1 Introduction

Caltrans has studied the potential impacts that would occur if the proposed project were built in an “Environmental Only Project Study Report.”⁷ The PSR examined one “no build” and one “build” option. The build alternative presented four options regarding the configuration of the Wilshire Blvd. interchange. Since the approval of the PSR, a new alternative to close the Waterford Street on-ramp has been added, and two of the build options are no longer under consideration due to the congestion they would cause on the local streets (See Section 2.2.4).

In an effort to improve traffic congestion by eliminating “stop and go” conditions on southbound I-405, FHWA and Caltrans propose to add auxiliary lanes between selected on- and off-ramps between I-10 and Waterford Street in the City of Los Angeles in Los Angeles County, California. In order to improve the weaving conditions at Wilshire Blvd., closure of the Waterford St. on-ramp is being proposed. In addition, one High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lane is proposed to provide continuity for the southbound HOV lane on the entire I-405 corridor in the Los Angeles County. The limits of the proposed project extend from Waterford Street to National Boulevard, kilometer post 47.0 to 51.6 (post mile 29.2 to 32.1), a distance of 4.6 km (2.9 miles). (Figure 2-1)

2.2 Alternatives Considered

2.2.1 Alternative 1—No Build

The first alternative is the no build option that maintains the current configuration of the existing freeway. The No Build Alternative assumes that no improvements are made to the I-405 corridor beyond those already planned. Under this option, the five existing southbound mixed flow lanes from National Blvd. to Waterford St. would remain unchanged. The existing southbound auxiliary lane between the eastbound Wilshire on-ramp and the Santa Monica Blvd. off-ramp will also remain intact. No right-of-way (property outside of the state’s ownership) will be required. The congestion and higher than average accident rates experienced in this area will not be alleviated and the situation will deteriorate with time. Alternative 1 does not meet the Purpose and Need for Action, which is to improve the flow of traffic on southbound I-405 by providing increased traffic capacity between I-10 and Waterford Street. This approach is also inconsistent with Caltrans’ goal of addressing transportation problems by providing an efficient and effective interregional mobility system.

⁷ A PSR is the initial document that will help secure support costs for production of the environmental document, and program the project for state funding in the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The PSR for this project was approved on May 14, 1999.

Figure 2-1 – Proposed Project



2.2.2 Alternative 2—Add High Occupancy Vehicle Lane and Auxiliary Lanes

The build option proposes to widen the existing facility to add a 3.6 meter (11.8 ft) HOV lane and a 0.6 meter (2 ft) buffer next to the median. The five existing mixed flow lanes will be restriped as four 3.3 meter (10.8 ft) lanes, and one 3.6 meter (11.8 ft) lane. The existing curbs will be removed, and a 3 meter (9.8 ft) standard outside shoulder and a 1 meter (3.3 ft) half median will also be provided by this project. For an image of the Proposed Typical Cross Sections see Appendix A.

The unfavorable weaving conditions on the mainline will be improved by adding approximately 1.5 km (0.9 miles) of auxiliary lanes between existing on- and off-ramps within the 4.6 km (2.9 mile) project limits. The two 3.6 meter (11.8 ft) auxiliary lanes will be added to the outside shoulder at different locations. One will be added upstream of the southbound off-ramp to westbound Wilshire. The off-ramp will be widened from a one-lane exit ramp to a two-lane exit ramp in order to increase storage capacity at the ramp. The second auxiliary lane will be added between the southbound I-405 on-ramp from Santa Monica Blvd. and the southbound I-405 off-ramp to Olympic Blvd. The existing auxiliary lane between the southbound I-405 on-ramp from eastbound Wilshire Blvd. and the southbound I-405 off-ramp to Santa Monica Blvd. will be maintained.

Since the Project Study Report's approval, an addition to Alternative 2 has been made. This alternative now also proposes to close the on-ramp from Waterford Street in order to help alleviate the weaving condition at the Wilshire Blvd. intersection. If this alternative were approved, the two soundwalls at Waterford Street that were proposed in the PSR would be combined. Temporary construction easements will be required at three locations to construct a retaining wall at the right-of-way line. The retaining walls are proposed to be located at the southbound I-405 off-ramp to Santa Monica Blvd., the off-ramp to westbound Wilshire Blvd. and between the Constitution Ave. undercrossing and Waterford Street. Right-of-way acquisition may be required at Olympic Blvd.

In order to attenuate noise impacts, the construction of soundwalls along southbound I-405 at various locations has been proposed. (Figure 5-1) A soundwall was also proposed in the PSR for northbound I-405 from Ohio Ave. to 350 meters (1148.29 ft) south of Wilshire Blvd. It is recommended to defer placement of this soundwall to the widening project that will take place on northbound I-405. The existing Type 50 median concrete barrier will be replaced with a water-carrying concrete barrier (Type 60W). Due to outside shoulder widening, the existing outside drainage must be modified as well. This alternative also involves the modification of drainage facilities, electroliers and pull boxes, roadside and overhead sign structures, fiber optic lines and landscaping.

The undercrossing structures at Olympic Blvd., Santa Monica Blvd., Ohio Ave., Wilshire Blvd., and Constitution Ave. will be widened to accommodate the new lanes and horizontal clearances of soundwalls. An Advance Planning Study should be performed for the widening of each of these structures. The Office of Maintenance has requested that the existing bridge railings on the southbound side be salvaged, and that two locations for maintenance vehicle pullouts be constructed. The pullouts are small paved

areas off the shoulder of the freeway, but within the right-of-way, as seen in the Preliminary Plan Layouts in Appendix A.

The Total Project Capital Outlay Cost for Alternative 2 is \$38,430,000. Each of the options has costs in addition to the base estimate, except for Wilshire Option A because its estimate is included in the base estimate.⁸

The final selection of alternatives will not be made until after the public circulation period, comments from the public meeting have been received, and all impacts have been considered.

2.2.3 Design Options for the Wilshire Blvd./I-405 Interchange

The widening proposal also includes two design options for the Wilshire Blvd. interchange. The cost estimate for Wilshire Option A is included in the base cost estimate of \$38,430,000 and Wilshire Option B would cost an additional \$1,390,000.

Wilshire Option A – Provide Auxiliary Lane between Loop Ramps

This design feature is Option 1 in the PSR, which maintains the configuration of the Wilshire Blvd. interchange and adds an auxiliary lane between the southbound I-405 on-ramp from westbound Wilshire Blvd. and the loop off-ramp to eastbound Wilshire Blvd. This is shown on the Preliminary Plan Layout Sheets 11 and 12 in Appendix A. The auxiliary lane is expected to improve operational conditions on the mainline. Under this option, the ramps will undergo minor improvements to satisfy design standards. Essentially no other change to the configuration of the Wilshire Blvd. interchange is proposed.

Wilshire Option B – Consolidate Wilshire Boulevard Off-ramps

In addition to the improvements listed in Section 2.2.2, the southbound I-405 loop off-ramp to eastbound Wilshire Blvd. will be closed under this option. The terminus of the southbound I-405 directional off-ramp to westbound Wilshire Blvd. will be widened to four lanes in order to increase ramp storage and accommodate traffic generated from the closed loop off-ramp. The Wilshire Blvd. intersection will be signalized to allow access to both directions of Wilshire from the proposed widened off-ramp. The loop on-ramp from westbound Wilshire Blvd. will remain intact. (Figure 1-3)

This option, which was called Option 2 in the PSR, would help to eliminate the existing weaving condition on mainline I-405. An undesirable effect of the traffic signal would be the aggravation of the existing traffic congestion on Wilshire Blvd. This may, in turn, result in a slow discharge of the off-ramp traffic to Wilshire Blvd. Improvements along Wilshire Blvd. would be necessary to maximize the benefits of this option.

⁸ Caltrans, Draft Project Report, Cost Estimate Summary, Attachment D-1, February 1, 2001.

This alternative will require the acquisition of right-of-way at the Veterans Administration maintenance yard, which is adjacent to the off-ramp to westbound Wilshire Blvd.

2.2.4 Design Options for the Olympic Blvd. Overcrossing

Two alternatives for the Olympic Boulevard overcrossing are under consideration due to restrictive geometric and right-of-way constraints. If Olympic Option A was selected an additional \$5,430,000 would be added to the base cost estimate, and if Option B was selected an additional \$5,160,000 would be added.

Olympic Option A – Construct Cantilever Structure over Existing Retaining Wall

Olympic Option A proposes to construct a cantilever structure over the existing retaining wall. This option would avoid the acquisition of the adjacent parcel located at 11240 West Olympic Blvd.; however, the construction work is expected to affect the Montgomery Anderson Design business for an extended period of time.

Olympic Option B – Construct Retaining Wall

This design alternative for the Olympic Blvd. off-ramp is to construct a retaining wall along the ramp. It would require the acquisition of the parcel adjacent to the ramp, located at 11240 West Olympic Blvd. This option would minimize construction costs; however, the acquisition of the property would require the commercial business on the parcel to be relocated.

2.2.5 Alternatives No Longer Under Consideration

The Project Study Report for the proposed project included two other build options that are similar, except for the modifications to the intersection at Wilshire Boulevard.

The first of the rejected options (Option 3 in the PSR) was to close both of the loop ramps at the Wilshire Blvd./I-405 interchange (Figure 1-3). Closing the ramps would eliminate the weaving condition on the mainline, which occurs because the ramps are spaced half a mile apart. To compensate for the closed loop ramps, the directional on- and off-ramps would be widened. A traffic signal would be installed to allow drivers access to both directions of Wilshire Blvd.

The second rejected option (Option 4 in the PSR) proposed to close the loop on-ramp to southbound I-405 from westbound Wilshire Blvd. Under this alternative the existing weaving conditions on southbound I-405 would be minimized. The southbound I-405 directional on-ramp from eastbound Wilshire will be improved to accommodate traffic generated from the closed loop on-ramp. The Wilshire Blvd. intersection would also be signalized and widened to allow access to the freeway from westbound Wilshire.

A traffic analysis of southbound I-405 at the Wilshire Blvd. interchange found that eastbound Wilshire Blvd. is heavily congested during peak periods from the signal at Westwood Blvd. through the Gayley Ave., Veteran Ave. and Sepulveda Blvd. traffic signals and past the I-405 overcrossing.⁹ Both of the rejected options would not be feasible because adding a traffic signal would worsen the existing congestion on Wilshire Blvd. If freeway traffic heading to eastbound Wilshire Blvd. were re-directed to the widened westbound Wilshire off-ramp, critical traffic congestion on the off-ramp would occur. Re-striping Wilshire Blvd. and installing a left turn signal for off-ramp traffic heading to eastbound Wilshire will not allow an adequate amount of traffic to discharge from the off-ramp since the local street is already so congested.

Other negative aspects of these options were the elimination of the free-flow access of westbound Wilshire Blvd. traffic to the southbound on-ramp, and the installation of traffic signals at the intersection that would worsen the existing traffic congestion on Wilshire Blvd.

2.3 Related Projects

2.3.1 Caltrans Projects

Caltrans is currently studying other projects in the I-405 corridor to relieve traffic congestion. HOV lanes are being planned for the entire I-405 corridor in Los Angeles County. North of the proposed project, from Waterford St. to Sunset Blvd., a southbound HOV lane is in the construction stage. South of the proposed project, from Interstate 10 to State Route 90, HOV lanes in both directions are at the design stage, and are scheduled to begin construction after March 2003. A roadway rehabilitation project for I-405 from Slauson Ave. to Constitution Ave. is also scheduled, and will begin construction in the year 2000. Also that year, a project to landscape the permanently closed southbound I-405 off-ramp to Waterford Street has been proposed to take place.

Traffic Operations Program Strategies (TOPS) are projects that focus on system management and operational improvements. Table 2-1 lists the TOPS project that are of the highest priority in the vicinity of the proposed project. They are proposed Investment Level I TOPS projects on I-405 that will be implemented concurrently with the proposed project.

⁹ Traffic Analysis Report, Ashraf W. Hanna, Caltrans Project Engineer, February 2000.

Table 2-1 – Traffic Operations Program Strategies Projects¹⁰

Location of Proposed Project	Description
I-405/I-105 Interchange	Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) site
Westbound I-105 to I-405 Connector	Upgrade Tunnel CCTV Cameras
Sepulveda Pass from Sunset Blvd. to Ventura Bl.	Intermediate Mainline Surveillance Station
I-405/I-105 Interchange	Highway Advisory Radio
I-405/I-10 Interchange	Relocate Communications Tower
I-405/I-10 Interchange	Modify Communications System
Northbound and Southbound on-ramps from I-105 to US Highway 101	Eliminate HOV bypass lanes and meter both lanes, i.e. add 1 meter per on-ramp including new loops
W/B I-10 to S/B I-405, E/B I-10 to S/B I-405, E/B SR-90 to N/B I-405, E/B SR-90 to S/B I-405	Install four connector meters

2.3.2 Metropolitan Transit Authority Projects

Caltrans is overseeing a MTA project that will improve Santa Monica Boulevard's north and southbound on-ramps to I-405. An environmental document has been completed for this action, and it is in the final design stage. The project is scheduled to begin construction in 2002.

The MTA Transportation Development and Implementation Planning unit has recently completed an initial study for a light rail extension to the Blue Line and an exclusive busway facility in the I-405 vicinity (See Section 6). The proposed light rail and busway facility will take place along I-405 between Santa Monica Blvd. and Pico Blvd. The MTA board has not yet made a decision to proceed with the environmental study for this project.

2.3.3 Veterans Parkway Improvements

Veterans Park is a nonprofit corporation sponsored by a gift from the J. Paul Getty Trust. This group is currently improving the Veterans Parkway, a half-mile stretch of Wilshire Blvd. bounded by the sites of three Federal agencies. Section 6.4 explains these plans in more detail. A primary initiative of the Veterans Park group is to enhance this area "with suitable gateways, groves, and monuments marking entrance to the zone and clarifying the presence of national institutions and purposes."¹¹ The organization, in partnership with Caltrans, has been awarded funding from the Resources Agency of California and Los Angeles County. This funding will support a project to plant over 500 trees within the I-405 clover leafs, and along the Wilshire corridor between Veteran Ave. and Federal Ave. Improvements have also been made to the Los Angeles National Cemetery, adding wrought iron perimeter fencing, and new grand entrance gates at Constitution and Sepulveda Blvd.

¹⁰ Caltrans, Project Study Report (Environmental Only), Route 405 Between 0.5 km South of I-10 Interchange and Waterford St., p.3, May 14, 1999.

¹¹ Robert S. Harris, Veterans Parkway Conceptual Design, pp. 3-4, 1996.

3. AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

3.1 Introduction

The following sections briefly describe the area that would potentially be affected by the proposed project. In conjunction with the description of the alternatives in Section 2 and the prediction of effects in Section 4, this section presents the baseline conditions against which the decision-makers and the public can review the effects of the alternatives.

3.2 Geology, Soil and Topography

3.2.1 Geologic Features

Regionally, the project site is located within the Los Angeles Basin, which is situated at the juncture of the Peninsular Range and Transverse Range Provinces. The Los Angeles Basin is divided into four distinct structural blocks, separated by major faults or flexures. The existing freeway is located in the northwestern block, which includes portions of the east-west trending San Fernando Valley and the Santa Monica Mountains. Structurally, this block is the only portion of the present-day basin located within the east-west trending Transverse Range Province.

3.2.2 Soil Conditions

Locally, the existing freeway is situated entirely over alluvial deposits.¹² These sediments consist of gravel, sand, and silt-clay derived predominantly from the Santa Monica Mountains, and gravel and sand from stream channels.

3.2.3 Seismicity

The proposed project is located in a seismically active area. The activity level is considered to be normal for the Southern California Region. The closest active earthquake fault zone, under the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act is the Newport-Inglewood Fault, located 4.32 km (2.7 miles) east of the project. There is no geological information that indicates an active fault immediately within the project area. A fault is considered to be active by the State of California if geologic evidence indicates that movement on the fault has occurred in the last 11,000 years, and potentially active if movement is demonstrated to have occurred in the last 2 million years.

The Santa Monica-Hollywood and Charnock fault systems are located close to the project area, but are not considered active within the vicinity of the project.¹³ At the present time

¹² T.W. Dibblee, Geologic Map of Beverly Hills and Van Nuys Quadrangles, Dibblee Geological Foundation Map #DF-31, June 1991.

¹³ Geotechnical Report Update, LA-405 PM 29.2 to 32.1, Gustavo Ortega, District Geologist, February 2001.

these faults have not been zoned within the project site, pursuant to the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act.

In addition to ground shaking, potential seismically induced hazards include primary ground rupture and liquefaction. The potential for these hazards to occur within the project area is discussed below. Primary ground rupture is defined as the surface displacement that occurs along the surface trace of the causative fault during an earthquake. Based on the review of several geologic/seismologic reports, it is concluded that the potential for ground rupture is very small and is not to be considered to be significant hazard for this project.¹⁴ Liquefaction exists when loose, saturated, granular soils lose their inherent shear strength due to excess water pressure that builds up during repeated movement from seismic activity. A regional study by the US Geological Survey (1985) found that the relative liquefaction susceptibility along the project is considered to be very low, although, the Department of Conservation-Division of Mines and Geology say that there is potential for liquefaction along the project. However, during the last two major earthquakes in the area (1971 San Fernando and 1994 Northridge) liquefaction did not occur within the entire project limits.

3.2.4 Topography

The site of the proposed project is relatively flat, sloping gently to the south. The project area does not contain unique geologic features or steep topography. Due to the presence of the existing roadbed, no ground surface relief features will be added that are not currently present.

3.3 Hydrology

The proposed project is located in a non-flood hazard area. The Federal Emergency Management Agency classifies the project area as Zone C, which means that it is an “area of minimal flooding.” There are no flood control channels or wild and scenic rivers present in the study area.

Groundwater was encountered during the foundation exploration conducted in 1954 for Bridge #53-708 (Santa Monica Blvd.) at a depth of 10.66 meters (35.0 feet).¹⁵

3.4 Air Quality

3.4.1 Air Basin and Air Quality

The study corridor is completely contained within the South Coast Air Basin (SCAB), a 17,094 square kilometer area encompassing all of Orange County and the non-desert

¹⁴ Geotechnical Investigation, LA-405 PM 29.2 to 32.1, Gustavo Ortega, District Geologist, April 2000.

¹⁵ Ibid.

portions of Los Angeles, Riverside, and San Bernardino Counties. The climate of this area is primarily determined by its terrain and geographical location. Regional meteorology is largely dominated by a persistent high-pressure area that commonly resides over the eastern Pacific Ocean. Seasonal variations in the strength and position of this pressure cell cause seasonal changes in the weather patterns of the area. Warm summers, mild winters, infrequent rainfall, moderate daytime on-shore breezes, and moderate humidity characterize local climatic conditions. This normally mild climatic condition is occasionally interrupted by periods of hot weather, winter storms, and Santa Ana winds.

The Basin's climate and topography are highly conducive to the formation and transport of air pollution. The air pollutants of greatest concern in the Basin are ozone, carbon monoxide, and fine particulate matter (PM₁₀), with the SCAB a federal non-attainment area for these pollutants. Particulate matter includes both liquid and solid particles of a wide range of sizes and composition. The principal health effect of the airborne particulate matter is on the respiratory system, although PM₁₀ has been associated with carcinogenic effects. Particulate matter in the form of fugitive dust mainly results from demolition, excavation/grading, and earth moving equipment.

The SCAB is an area of high air pollution potential, particularly from June through September. The poor ventilation is generally attributed to light winds and shallow vertical mixing. This frequently results in insufficient dispersion, thus causing elevated air pollution levels. Pollutant concentrations in the South Coast Air Basin vary with location, season, and time of day. For example, ozone concentrations tend to be lower along the coast, higher in the near inland valleys and lower in the far inland areas of the Basin and adjacent desert.

3.4.2 Regulatory and Planning Requirements

Federal Clean Air Act

The Federal Clean Air Act (CAA) act authorizes the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to establish National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for air pollutants of nationwide concern, and specifies future dates for achieving compliance. The act also requires each state to submit a State Implementation Plan (SIP) applicable to appropriate industrial sources in the state.¹⁶

Both the federal government, through the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and California, through the California Air Resources Board (CARB), set ambient air standards to protect public health and welfare. Regionally, the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) and the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) prepare the Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP) which contains measures to meet state and federal requirements. When approved by CARB and the federal EPA, the AQMP becomes part of the State Implementation Plan (SIP).

¹⁶ Joint FHWA and Caltrans, "Standard Reference" of Federal Environmental Legislation Affecting Transportation and Guidance on Preparing NEPA Documents and Section 4(f) Evaluations, January 1999.

The Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 require that transportation projects that are funded by Title 23 USC or the Federal Transit Act conform to state and federal air quality plans. In order to be found in conformance, a project must come from approved transportation plans and programs, such as the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and the Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP). A prerequisite for inclusion in the RTIP is that the project must have been included in the regional model in order to determine its emissions effects.

The auxiliary lane portion of this project is identified in the 2000 Regional Transportation Improvement Program; however, the HOV lane portion of this project was not. Caltrans is currently coordinating with MTA and SCAG to add the HOV portion to the amended 2000 RTIP (Appendix G). Upon inclusion of the HOV lane into the 2000 TIP, and U.S. DOT (FHWA/FTA) approval, this project will be in conformance with the requirements of the Federal Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990.¹⁷

California Clean Air Act

The California Clean Air Act of 1988 requires attainment of state ambient air quality standards by the earliest possible date. For air districts in violation of the state ozone, carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, or nitrogen dioxide standards, attainment plans were required by July 1991.¹⁸

The State of California has set additional, stricter standards for most of the criteria and other pollutants. Table 3-1 shows that for the California Ambient Air Quality Standards and National Ambient Air Quality Standards currently in effect for the criteria pollutants, the project area is not at attainment status.

3.4.3 Existing Air Quality

Over the past several decades the State and Federal governments have established air quality standards for pollutants that may be unhealthful to humans. Currently, there are seven air pollutants of concern nationwide: carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, PM₁₀, PM_{2.5}, ozone, and lead. These pollutants are collectively referred to as “criteria pollutants.” The Basin fails to meet federal standards for ozone, carbon monoxide, and PM₁₀, therefore, it is considered a federal “non-attainment” area for these pollutants.

The SCAQMD monitors air quality at stations located throughout the Basin. The closest monitoring station to the proposed project is located at the Veterans Administration Hospital in West Los Angeles. The most recent data for ozone, carbon monoxide, and PM₁₀ is shown in Table 3-1.

¹⁷ Leann Williams, Caltrans Senior Transportation Planner, Air Quality & Aviation Program, E-mail Memorandum, January 9, 2001.

¹⁸ California Environmental Protection Agency Website, www.calepa.ca.gov/legislation/1996/ab3048.htm.

Table 3-1 – Pollutant Standards and Northwest/Southwest Coast Monitoring Station Ambient Air Quality Data

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Carbon Monoxide (CO)					
<i>State standard (1-hr avg. > 20 ppm)</i>					
<i>State standard (8-hr avg. > 9.0 ppm)</i>					
<i>Federal standard (1-hr avg. > 35 ppm)</i>					
<i>Federal standard (8-hr avg. > 9 ppm)</i>					
Monitor Location: VA Hospital (Northwest Coast)					
Maximum concentration 1-hr period (ppm)	9	8*	7	7	7
Maximum concentration 8-hr period (ppm)	6.0	5.6*	4.5	4.4	4.5
Number of days State 1-hr standard exceeded	0	0*	0	0	0
Number of days federal 1-hr standard exceeded	-	-	-	-	0
Number of days State 8-hr standard exceeded	0	0*	0	0	0
Number of days federal 8-hr standard exceeded	0	0*	0	0	-
Ozone (O₃)					
<i>State Standard (1-hr avg. > 0.09 ppm)</i>					
<i>Federal Standard (1-hr avg. > 0.12 ppm)</i>					
Monitor Location: VA Hospital (Northwest Coast)					
Maximum concentration 1-hr period (ppm)	0.16	0.14*	0.14	0.11	0.13
Number of days State 1-hr. standard exceeded	15	19*	13	6	7
Number of days federal 1-hr. standard exceeded	2	1*	1	0	1
Suspended Particulates (PM₁₀)					
<i>State standard (24-hr avg. > 50 µg/m³)</i>					
<i>Federal standard (24-hr avg. > 150 µg/m³)</i>					
Monitor Location: Hawthorne (Southwest Coast)**					
Maximum 24-hr concentration (µg/m ³)	81	136	107	79*	66
Percent of sample days exceeding State standard	18.0%	13.8%	8.3%	7.3%*	11.9%
Percent of sample days exceeding federal standard	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%*	0.0%

* Less than 12 full months data. May not be representative.

** PM₁₀ was not monitored at the VA Hospital (Northwest Coast), so readings from the Southwest Coast are used here to show approximate values.

ppm = parts per million, µg/m³ = micrograms per cubic meter

Source: South Coast Air Quality Management District, Air Quality Data 1996-1998.

3.5 Hazardous Wastes

Preliminary findings from a field investigation have shown that further hazardous waste studies are necessary. There is some concern for asbestos containing material on the bridges that will be widened, aerially deposited lead on the soil where the shoulder will be widened, and contaminated groundwater. The proposed project may impact two industrial parcels which are located at 11240 West Olympic Blvd., and the northwest quadrant of the I-405/Wilshire Blvd. interchange. If either parcel is affected, a Site Investigation is warranted in order to determine the level of aerially deposited lead, asbestos, and lead paint contamination at the site. In addition, this segment of I-405 has a contaminated aquifer, according to the Los Angeles Water Quality Control Board. Since groundwater contamination is a regional problem, Caltrans' Legal Department should be consulted for any new right-of-way acquisitions.¹⁹

¹⁹ Steve Chan, Caltrans Senior Transportation Engineer, e-mail memorandum, February 28, 2000.

3.6 Biological Resources

3.6.1 Existing Biological Resources

Due to its urban surroundings, the proposed project area is not considered a prime wildlife habitat. However, a portion of the project is located a little over one mile from a relatively undeveloped area of the Santa Monica Mountains. Immediately adjacent to the freeway are a large number of trees and shrubs, but only a few of them are native plants (in a landscape setting). Some of the species identified in this area include eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus* spp.), pepper trees (*Schinus* spp.), jacaranda trees (*Jacaranda* spp.), and California black walnut (*Juglans californica*). There are no natural drainages within the project limits; therefore, no resource agency permits will be required. There are no sensitive species known or likely to occur within the area.²⁰

3.6.2 Executive Order 13112, Invasive Species

On February 3, 1999, Executive Order 13112 (EO 13112) was signed into law. It calls on Executive Branch agencies to work to prevent and control the introduction and spread of invasive species. Highway corridors provide opportunities for the movement of invasive species through the landscape by way of vehicles, mowing operations, or imported soil. Some invasive plant species might inadvertently be planted in erosion control, landscape, or wildflower projects.

EO 13112 builds on the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, the Federal Noxious Weed Act of 1974, and the Endangered Species Act of 1973 to prevent the introduction of invasive species, provide for their control, and take measures to minimize economic, ecological, and human health impacts. Under EO 13112, Federal agencies cannot authorize, fund, or carry out actions that it believes are likely to cause or promote the introduction or spread of invasive species in the United States or elsewhere unless all reasonable measures to minimize risk of harm have been analyzed and considered.

3.7 Noise

3.7.1 Fundamentals of Noise

Human hearing is most sensitive to sounds between 1 and 5 kilo Hertz (kHz). Higher and lower frequency sounds are perceived, although with less sensitivity. Therefore, sound pressure level alone is not a reliable indicator of loudness, as perceived by people. The frequency or pitch of sounds has a substantial effect on how humans respond. In order to approximate the frequency response of the human ear, a series of sound pressure level adjustments is applied to the sound measured by the sound level meter. The A-scale was developed to approximate the frequency response of the average young ear. Studies have shown that when people make relative judgements of the nuisance value of noise they

²⁰ Natural Environment Study Report, Karl Price, Caltrans District Biologist, May 30, 2000.

most often correlate with the A-scale sound levels determined by a sound level meter. Table 3-2 shows a range of noise levels associated with common activities.

A number of descriptors have been devised by acousticians to rate noise on the basis of such things as annoyance, loudness, short term, long term and by statistical levels. All Caltrans highway traffic noise analyses are shown in terms of the worst noise hour Leq(h), which is the equivalent steady state sound level in a stated period of time that would contain the same acoustical energy as the time-varying sound level during the same period. The result is the average acoustic energy for that period of time which is converted back to a decibel level.²¹

Table 3-2 – Typical Noise Levels

Common Outdoor Activities	Noise Level Decibels	Common Indoor Activities
Jet Fly-over at 300 m (1000 ft)	105	Rock Band
Gas Lawnmower at 1 m (3 ft)	95	
Diesel Truck at 15 m (50 ft) at 50 mph	80	Garbage Disposal at 1 m (3 ft)
Noisy Urban Area, Daytime	75	
Gas Lawnmower, 30 m (100 ft)	70	Vacuum Cleaner at 3 m (10 ft)
Commercial Area Heavy Traffic at 90m(300ft)	60	
Quiet Urban Daytime	50	Dishwasher, Adjacent room
Quiet Urban Nighttime	40	Theater, Large Conference Room
Quiet Suburban Nighttime	35	Library, Bedroom at Night
Quiet Rural Nighttime	25	
	10	Broadcast or Recording Studio
Lowest Threshold of Human Hearing	0	Lowest Threshold of Human Hearing

Technical Noise Supplement to the Traffic Noise Analysis Protocol, Caltrans, October 1998, p. 18.

3.7.2 Federal Requirements

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Regulations

The proposed project is classified as a Type I project because it involves the physical alteration of an existing highway, changes the horizontal alignment, and increases the number of through-traffic lanes.²²

Under the FHWA regulations, noise abatement must be considered for Type I projects when the project results in a substantial noise increase, or when predicted noise levels approach or exceed the Noise Abatement Criteria. Noise abatement measures which are feasible and reasonable and that are likely to be incorporated in the project, as well as noise impacts for which no apparent solution is available, must be identified and incorporated into the project's plans and specifications (23 CFR 772.11 (e)(1) and (2)).

²¹ Noise Study Report, Caltrans Environmental Engineering and Feasibility Studies, November 1, 1999.

²² Code of Federal Regulations Title 23 CFR, part 772, under the 1998 New Traffic Noise Analysis protocol.

Projects complying with the FHWA regulations are also in compliance with the requirements stemming from NEPA.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

Under NEPA, possible impacts and measures to mitigate adverse impacts must be identified in the environmental document. This includes mentioning the impacts for which partial or no mitigation is feasible.

3.7.3 California Requirements

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

Under CEQA, a substantial noise increase may result in a significant adverse environmental effect. Therefore, it must be mitigated or identified as a noise impact for which it is likely that no, or only partial abatement measures are available. Specific economic, social, environmental, legal, and technological conditions may make additional noise attenuation measures infeasible.

Street and Highways Code, Article 6, Section 216

If, as a result of a proposed freeway project, noise levels in classrooms of public or private elementary or secondary schools exceed 52 dBA, Leq(h) the Department shall provide noise abatement to reduce classroom noise to the criteria or below. If the classroom noise exceeds the criteria before and after the freeway project, the Department shall provide noise abatement to reduce classroom noise to pre-project noise levels. The requirements are covered in the Streets and Highways Code, Article 6, Section 216-Control of Freeway Noise in School.

3.7.4 Existing Noise Environment

The area surrounding the project location consists of both commercial and residential zones. The Noise Analysis Summary in Table 5-1 shows current traffic noise levels as well as the existing wall height and location. Caltrans Noise Investigations Section has examined and identified all land use activities for noise impacts, including commercial and undeveloped lands. The map in Figure 5-1 shows the location of the project limits, existing soundwalls, sites where noise readings were taken and the surrounding land uses.

There is one commercial property that may potentially be affected by the proposed project because it has an outside patio area. Big Tomy's Restaurant is the business of concern, and is located at 11289 West Pico Boulevard on the corner of Sawtelle and West Pico Boulevard. This site is currently impacted by local street traffic noise and partially by freeway traffic noise, causing the average noise level to be 77 decibels. This property is under the I-405 viaduct and therefore, it is contiguous to the Caltrans right-of-way. Freeway noise contribution to the restaurant is limited due to the fact that it is at least 30 feet below the freeway level.

3.8 Land Use and Planning

The proposed project area is located in a heavily urbanized transportation corridor. The northern section of the project area is surrounded by the Veterans Administration to the west of I-405, and the Los Angeles National Cemetery to the east. South of Ohio Avenue, extending to the end of the project, there is a mixture of high, medium, and low density residential, commercial, and industrial use. (Figure 3-1)

A pedestrian walkway exists within the state right-of-way between Constitution Avenue and Waterford Street. The walkway, which traverses the right-of-way line, has been maintained by the City of Los Angeles since a Freeway Agreement was executed on May 4, 1957. Fences are situated on both sides of the walkway. The westerly fence constitutes the state right-of-way, and the easterly fence separates the freeway embankment and the walkway.

3.9 Social Environment

The study of the existing social environment in the proposed project area is based on 1990 Census Data. There are seven census tracts that are adjacent to the project area, as shown in Figure 3-2. The majority of residential areas in the vicinity of the proposed project consist of middle to upper middle class households. All of the affected census tracts, except two, have a higher median household income than the City of Los Angeles average of \$30,925. The poverty status in the affected census tracts is 10% of the population, in comparison to 19% in the City of Los Angeles. Figure 3-3 charts Income and Poverty Status in both the project area and the City of Los Angeles. The employment rate was slightly higher in the affected census tracts, compared to the City and County of Los Angeles. This will continue to be a highly employed area according to the Southern California Association of Governments' projections for the year 2000 and beyond.²³ The percentage of people with physical disabilities is also lower in the affected census tracts (5%) than the City of Los Angeles (8%). See Figure 3-4 for the breakdown of physical disabilities in the project area, and the City. There are also a lower percentage of ethnic minorities in the affected census tracts. The City of Los Angeles is 39% white, and the affected census tracts are 61% white.²⁴ See Figure 3-5 to compare the ethnic composition of the project area to that of the City of Los Angeles.

²³ Draft Relocation Impact Report, Lorna Foster, Caltrans Right of Way Agent, June 7, 2000.

²⁴ US Census Data, 1990.

3.10 Housing

Of the total housing units in the seven affected census tracts, 6% are vacant. There is a mix of low, medium and high-density residential units at certain sections of the proposed project (Figure 3-1). The median gross rent ranged from \$689 to \$923 in 1990, and with rent control enforced, this range remains fairly constant. The affected census tracts experience a higher rent, compared to the \$600 median gross rent for the City of Los Angeles.²⁵

3.11 Economics

As shown in the Land Use Map in Figure 3-1, pockets of commercial and industrial land use occur adjacent to I-405 near the major cross streets at Santa Monica, Olympic, and West Pico Boulevards.

²⁵ Draft Relocation Impact Report, Lorna Foster, Caltrans Right of Way Agent, June 7, 2000.

Figure 3-1 – Land Use Map

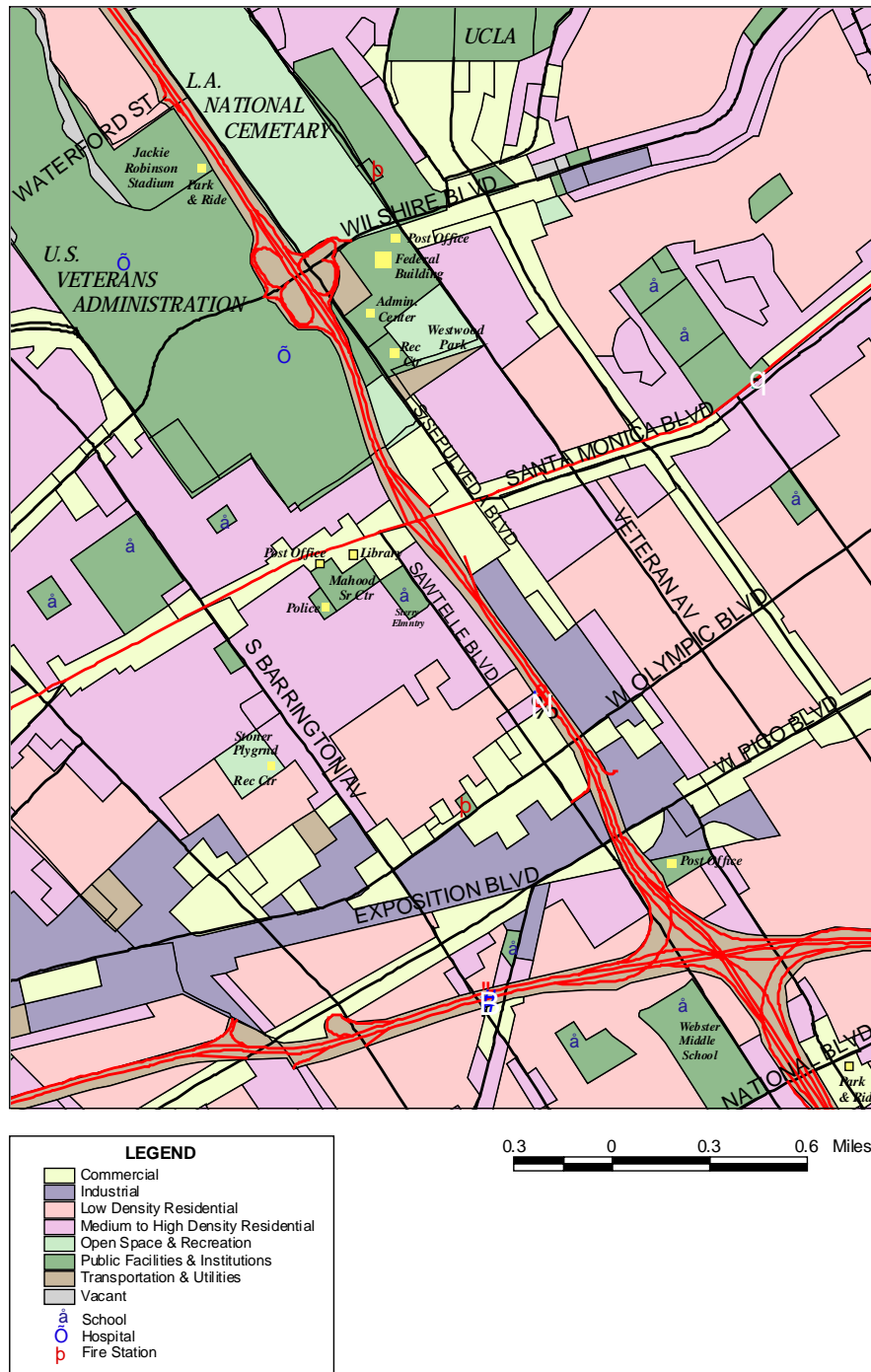


Figure 3-2 – Census Tracts in the Project Area

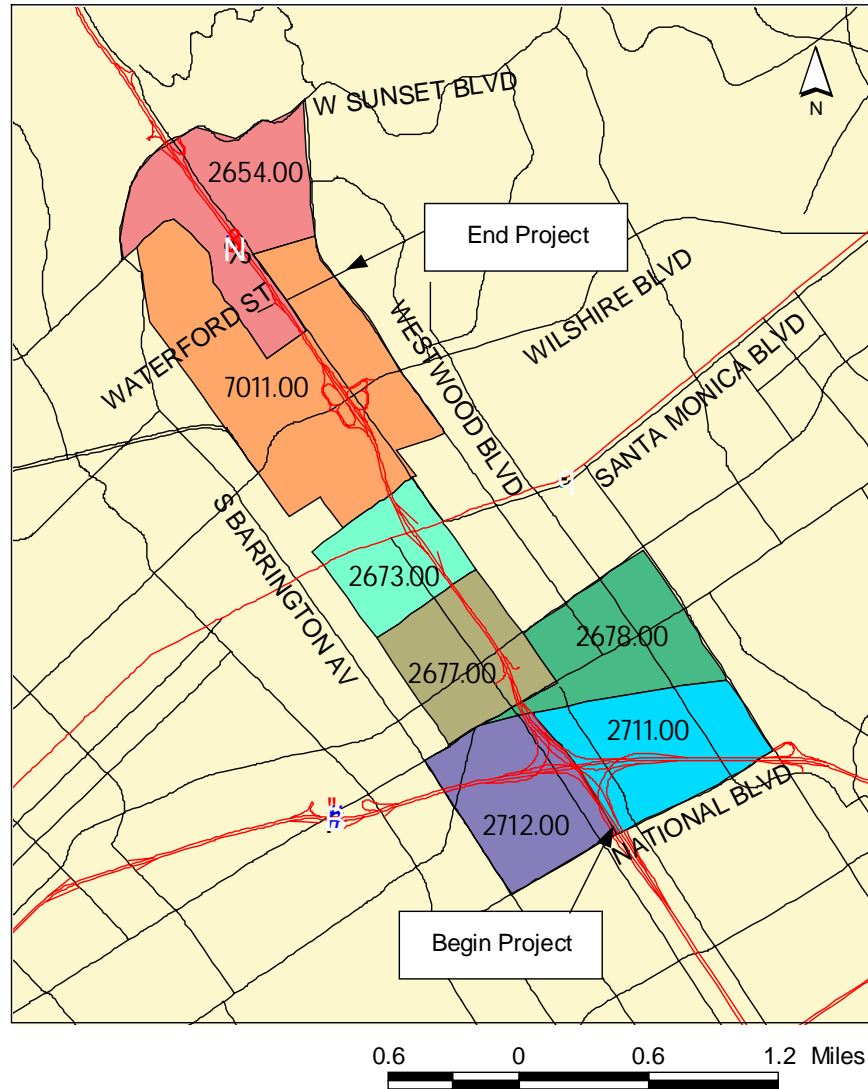
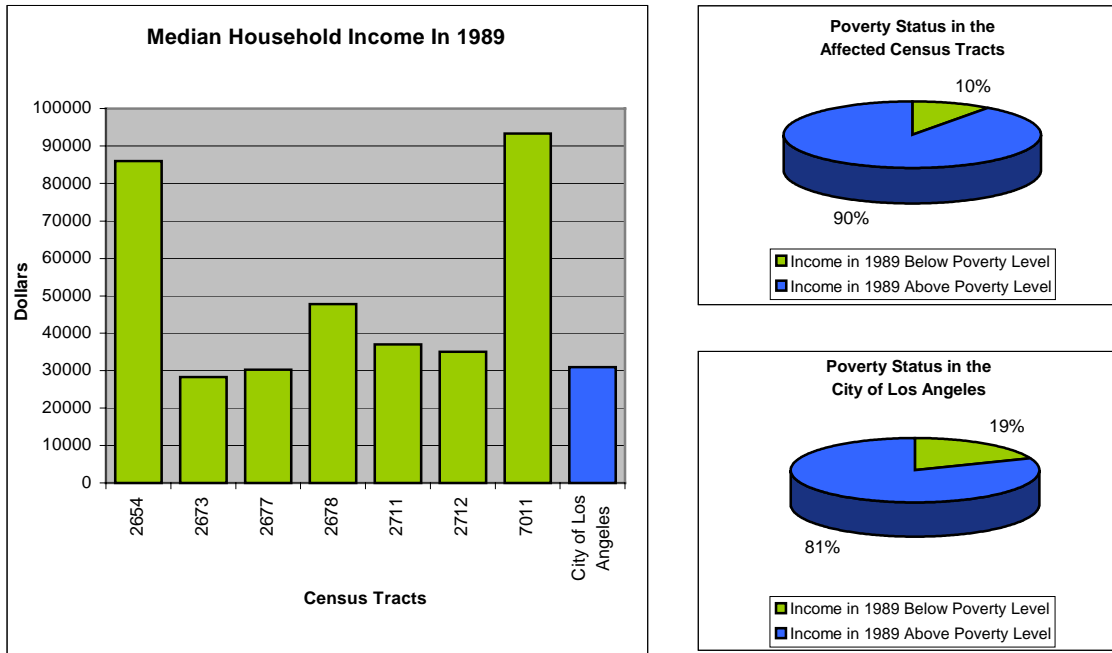
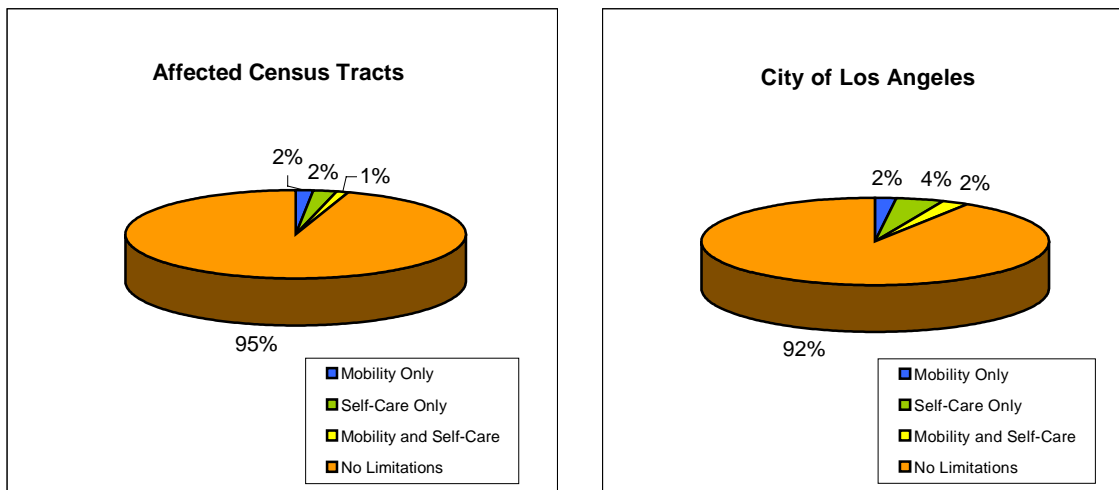


Figure 3-3 – Income and Poverty Status



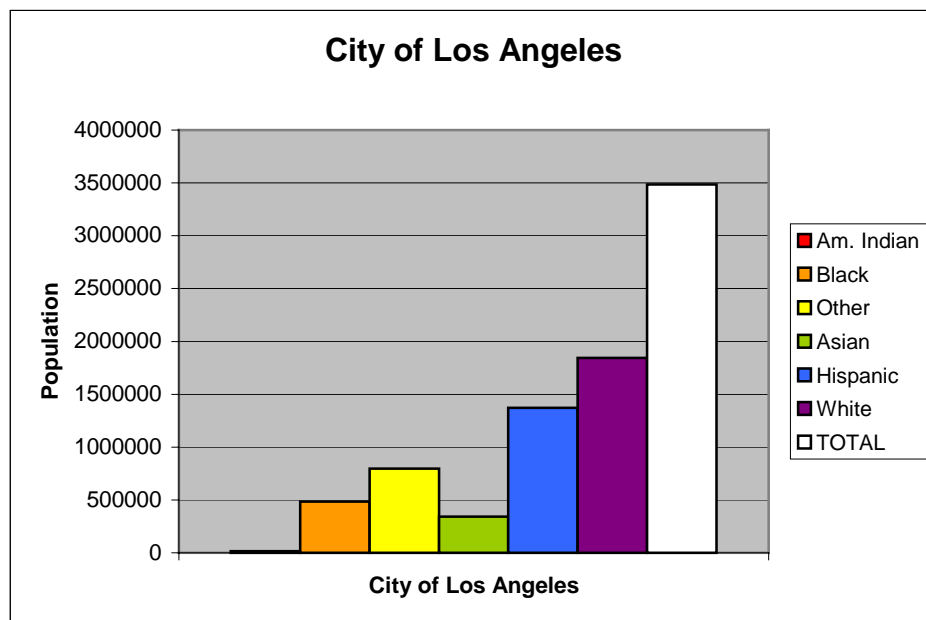
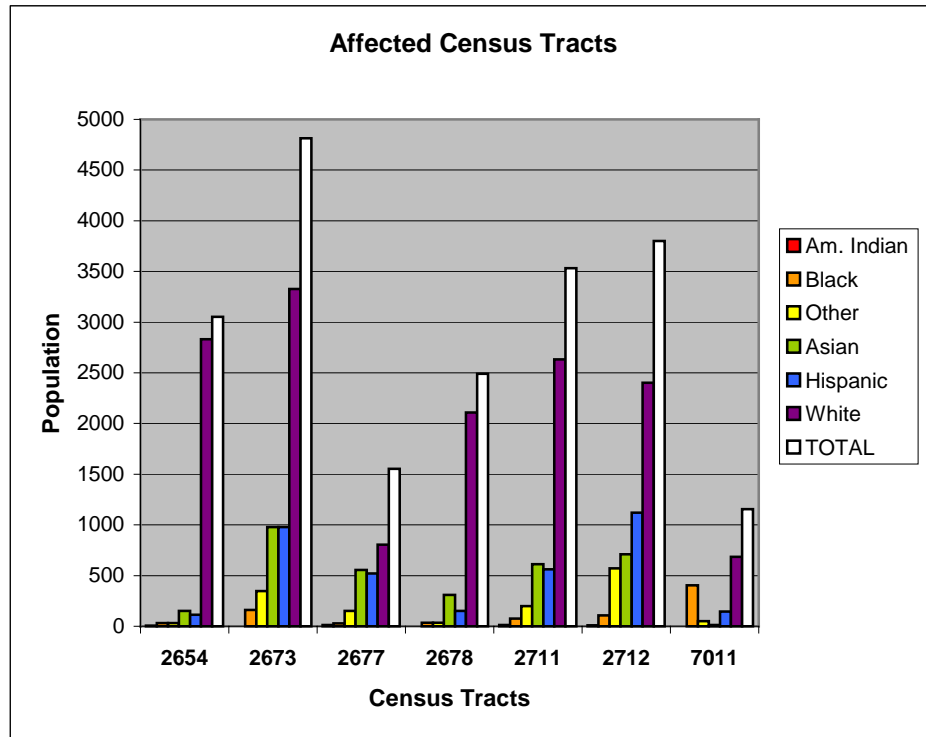
Data obtained from the 1990 United States Census Bureau

Figure 3-4 – Mobility and Self-Care Limitation Status



Data obtained from the 1990 United States Census Bureau
Civilian non-institutionalized persons 16 years and over

Figure 3-5 – Ethnic Composition



Data obtained from the 1990 United States Census Bureau
 Data exceeds Total population because Hispanic overlaps with other ethnicities

3.12 Public Services and Facilities

The following is a list of the public services and facilities located near the project.

- University of California, Los Angeles
- Jackie Robinson Stadium, Constitution Ave.
- Park and Ride Lot, Veterans Administration, 11300 Constitution Ave.
- Pedestrian Walkway, between Constitution Ave. and Waterford St.
- Los Angeles National Cemetery, 950 South Sepulveda Blvd.
- Westwood Fire Station, 1090 Veteran Ave.
- Federal Building, 11000 Wilshire Blvd.
- United States Post Office, 11000 Wilshire Blvd.
- Veterans Benefits Administration, Federal Building, 11000 Wilshire Blvd.
- Veterans Administration Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System, 11301 Wilshire Blvd.
- Westwood Park and Recreation Center, 1350 South Sepulveda Blvd.
- Westwood Transitional Village, 1341-1401 Sepulveda Blvd.
- Felicia Mahood Multi Purpose Senior Center, 11338 Santa Monica Blvd.
- West Los Angeles Regional Library, 11360 Santa Monica Blvd.
- United States Post Office, 11420 Santa Monica Blvd.
- West Los Angeles Community Police Station, 1663 Butler Ave.
- Nora Sterry Elementary School, 1730 Corinth Ave.
- Westside Family YMCA, 11311 La Grange Ave.
- Japanese Institute of Sawtelle, 2110 Corinth Ave.
- West Los Angeles Fire Station, 11505 Olympic Blvd.
- West Los Angeles Community Job Center, 11299 West Exposition Blvd.
- United States Post Office, 11270 Exposition Blvd.
- Daniel Webster Middle School, 11330 Graham Place
- Park and Ride Lot, St. John's Presbyterian Church, 11000 National Blvd.

3.13 Circulation

Interstate 405, or the San Diego Freeway, is an interstate/interregional freeway that trends north/south through an urban area (See Section 1.1 for more information). Key interchanges within the study area include junctions with I-10 (a major east/west freeway), West Pico/Olympic, Santa Monica, and Wilshire Boulevards. To define the existing traffic conditions, traffic volume data for the on- and off-ramps, and freeway mainline was collected. Refer to Table 3-3 and Table 3-4 for summaries of this information.

Santa Monica's Big Blue Bus and LADOT's Commuter Express serve the area of the proposed project with public transportation. Ten of the thirteen Big Blue Bus routes cross under the San Diego Freeway at Church Lane, National, Pico, Olympic or Santa Monica Boulevard (Figure 3-7). The Big Blue Bus is a vital source for transit riders traveling to and from such places as UCLA, the Getty Center, Los Angeles International Airport, downtown Los Angeles and the Pico-Rimpau Transit Center in Santa Monica. Currently the buses do not carry passengers on I-405, but they do use the freeway after they are

empty to return to the beginning of their routes quickly. The LADOT Commuter Express provides weekday service on I-405 from Sylmar to Westchester, Mission Hills to Westwood, and Pacific Palisades to Downtown Los Angeles. Maps of these routes are available in Appendix E.

Table 3-3 – 1999 Traffic Volumes for Southbound I-405 Ramps²⁶

Ramp Volumes (5-day averages)	Sunset Off	Sunset On	Sunset EB On	Waterford On	Wilshire WB Off	Wilshire WB On	Wilshire EB Off	Wilshire EB On	Santa Monica Off	Santa Monica On	Olympic/Pico Off	I-10 WB Off	I-10 EB Off	I-10 EB On	I-10 WB On	National On
AM Peak Hour	1179	461	387	206	658	679	762	725	1017	1150	782	1709	1654	1654	1061	542
PM Peak Hour	1062	617	329	214	545	1319	675	793	686	1268	525	1326	1635	1635	1516	796

Obtained from pneumatic tubes placed in February and April of 1999

Table 3-4 – 1999 Traffic Volumes for Mainline I-405 (Both Directions)²⁷

Mile-post	Description	Peak Hour	Average Daily Peak Month	Traffic Annual
29.54	West LA, Jct. I-10, Santa Monica Freeway	20,800	307,000	297,000
30.18	Olympic Boulevard	22,500	331,000	322,000
30.86	West LA, Juct. Rte. 2, Santa Monica Blvd.	20,800	304,000	296,000
31.54	Wilshire Boulevard	18,900	275,000	268,000
32.5	Bel Air, Waterford Street/Montana Ave.			

3.14 Cultural Resources

To identify historic and archaeological resources, the setting was researched through a number of lists, sources, and field surveys and an Area of Potential Effect (APE) was established in consultation with FHWA. The APE has been set at the maximum right-of-way line for all alternatives (Appendix B). At some locations, where partial or full takings of adjacent properties are required, the APE was extended to include the affected property and one property beyond to account for potential indirect effects such as noise, light, glare, and alteration of the existing setting.

²⁶ Southbound I-405 Ramp Volumes, Caltrans Regional Planning/LARTS, March 2, 2001.

²⁷ 1999 Traffic Volumes on the California State Highway System, Caltrans Division of Traffic Operations, December 2000.

The I-405 freeway corridor in the project area is a highly urbanized landscape, consisting of a mixture of post-World War II light industrial buildings, single family residences from the 1920s to the 1950s, and more contemporary multiple family dwellings. No buildings of these types are individually distinguished architecturally. In addition, there are no historically significant events or persons associated with these properties. There appears to be no potential for a historic district or cultural landscape within all or part of the Area of Potential Effect. The State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) found that the APE is defined appropriately, and none of the properties located within the APE are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The SHPO also found that the FHWA undertook adequate correspondence with local organizations and tribal groups, the cultural resource studies conducted to date are adequate, and no historic properties will be affected by the proposed undertaking. The concurrence letter is located in Appendix C.

A total of seventy-two improved properties and twenty bridges are located within the proposed project's APE. The results of the investigative survey identified no properties previously eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. In addition, these properties were evaluated in accordance with Section 15064.5 (a)(2) of the CEQA Guidelines. It was determined that there are no properties that qualify as historical resources for the purposes of CEQA.²⁸

An Archaeological Survey Report determined that no prehistoric or historic archaeological sites were located within the project area.²⁹

3.15 Visual

The existing views and their quality were evaluated using scenic quality evaluation criteria set in the Visual Impact Assessment For Highway Projects (USDOT, FHA c. 1979). Since the project limits extend for only 3 miles, and this section of I-405 is physically homogeneous, or of uniform structure, two View Points were selected for evaluation (Figure 5-2 and Figure 5-3). View Point #1 (VP-1) is taken from a southbound freeway lane near Wilshire Blvd. The visual quality of this view is evaluated as "average." From this standpoint, the terrain is flat and featureless, and there is approximately an even balance between vegetation and man-made elements. VP-2 is taken from Beloit Avenue, a street that runs parallel to the freeway. Looking towards the San Diego Freeway from VP-2, the visual quality is slightly below average due to the fact that the freeway is in view from the existing residences. The terrain here is also flat and featureless, and the vegetation and man-made impacts are both well developed.

The Veterans Park organization has been successful in beautifying Wilshire Blvd. in the vicinity of I-405. In partnership with Caltrans, hundreds of trees have been planted along the freeway interchange, the perimeter of the National Cemetery, and Wilshire Blvd.³⁰

²⁸ Negative Historic Property Survey Report, Claudia Harbert, Caltrans Architectural Historian, June 2000.

²⁹ Negative Archaeological Survey Report, Gary Iverson, Caltrans Staff Archaeologist, July 1999.

³⁰ Veterans Park, Veterans Parkway Newsletter, Fall/Winter 1999.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

4.1 *Introduction*

Section 4 (Environmental Evaluation), combined with Sections 3 (Affected Environment) and 5 (Environmental Consequences), constitutes the scientific and analytic basis for the comparison of effects presented in Section 2 (Alternatives) of this Initial Study/Environmental Assessment.

To determine the environmental impacts of the proposed project, an Environmental Significance Checklist for the California Environmental Quality Act was used. The checklist provides a format for identifying likely impacts, and assists the project evaluators in focusing on relevant issues of the project. Narrative discussions of impacts and proposed mitigation measures are found following the checklist.

4.2 *List of Technical Studies/Reports*

The following studies or environmental documents have been prepared and incorporated by reference in this environmental evaluation. These reports are available for review at the Caltrans District 7 Office in downtown Los Angeles. Please call Mr. Ronald J. Kosinski at (213) 897-0703 to schedule an appointment.

- Project Study Report (Environmental Only), May 1999
- Geotechnical Investigation, April 2000
- Visual Impact Assessment, May 2000
- 1998 Traffic Volumes on the California State Highway System, June 1999
- Noise Study Report, November 1999; Noise Reevaluation, June 2000
- Hydraulic Study, January 2000
- Negative Archaeological Survey Report, July 1999
- Traffic Analysis Report, Southbound Route 405 at Wilshire Blvd. Interchange, February 2000
- Traffic Projections, April 2000
- Physical Environmental Report, January 2000
- Negative Historic Property Survey Report, June 2000
- Draft Relocation Impact Report, June 2000
- Natural Environment Study Report, May 2000
- Hazardous Waste Memo, February 2000; Cost Estimate, June 2000

4.3 Environmental Significance Checklist

This checklist is used to identify physical, biological, social and economic factors that may be affected by the proposed project. In some cases, the background studies performed in connection with this project clearly indicate the project will not affect a particular item. A "No" answer in the first column documents these determinations. A "Yes" answer in the first column indicates that a particular factor will be affected by the project and is followed by a response in the second column as to whether the effect is significant (as defined by CEQA). Where the checklist refers to a resource that is not involved or associated with the project in any way, it has been determined that there are no project-imposed effects. Each of the checklist items is discussed in Section 5, regardless of their impact.

Figure 4-1 – CEQA Environmental Significance Checklist

PHYSICAL		Yes or No	If Yes, is it significant? Yes or No
Will the proposal (either directly or indirectly):			
1.	Appreciably change the topography or ground surface relief features?	Yes	No
2.	Destroy, cover, or modify any unique geologic or physical features?	No	
3.	Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource or locally important mineral resource recovery site that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	No	
4.	Result in unstable earth surfaces or increase the exposure of people or property to geologic or seismic hazards?	No	
5.	Result in or be affected by soil erosion or siltation (whether by water or wind)?	Yes	No
6.	Result in the increased use of fuel or energy in large amounts or in a wasteful manner?	No	
7.	Result in an increase in the rate of use of any natural resource?	No	
8.	Result in the substantial depletion of any nonrenewable resource?	No	
9.	Violate any published Federal, State, or local standards pertaining to hazardous waste, solid waste or litter control?	No	
10.	Modify a bay, inlet, lake, channel of a river or stream, or the bed of the ocean?	No	
11.	Encroach upon a floodplain or result in or be affected by floodwaters or tidal waves?	No	
12.	Adversely affect the quantity or quality of surface water, groundwater, or public water supply?	No	
13.	Result in the use of water in large amounts or in a wasteful manner?	No	
14.	Affect wetlands or riparian vegetation?	No	
15.	Violate or be inconsistent with Federal, State or local water quality standards?	No	
16.	Result in changes in air movement, moisture, or temperature, or any climatic conditions?	No	
17.	Result in an increase in air pollutant emissions, adverse effects on or deterioration of ambient air quality?	No	
18.	Result in the creation of objectionable odors?	No	
19.	Violate or be inconsistent with Federal, State, or local air standards or control plans?	No	
20.	Result in an increase in noise levels or vibration for adjoining areas?	Yes	No
21.	Result in any Federal, State, or local noise criteria being equal or exceeded?	Yes	No

22.	Produce new light, glare, or shadows?	No	
BIOLOGICAL Will the proposal (either directly or indirectly):		Yes or No	If Yes, is it significant? Yes or No
23.	Change the diversity of species or number of any species of (including trees, shrubs, grass, microflora, and aquatic plants)?	Yes	No
24.	Reduce or encroach upon the critical habitat of any unique, threatened or endangered species of plants?	No	
25.	Introduce new species of plants into an area, or result in a barrier to the normal replenishment of existing species?	No	
26.	Reduce the acreage of any agricultural crop or commercial timber stands, or affect prime, unique, or other farmland of State or local importance?	No	
27.	Result in the removal or deterioration of existing fish or wildlife habitat?	Yes	No
28.	Change the diversity of species, or numbers of any species of animal (birds, land animals, reptiles, fish and shellfish, benthic organisms, insects or microfauna)?	No	
29.	Reduce or encroach upon the critical habitat of any unique, threatened or endangered animal species?	No	
30.	Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan, natural community conservation plan or other approved local, regional or state habitat plan?	No	
31.	Introduce new species of animals into an area, or result in a barrier to the migration or movement of animals?	Yes	No
SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC Will the proposal (directly or indirectly):		Yes or No	If Yes, is it significant? Yes or No
32.	Cause disruption of orderly planned development?	No	
33.	Be inconsistent with any elements of adopted community plans, policies or goals?	No	
34.	Be inconsistent with a Coastal Zone Management Plan?	No	
35.	Affect the location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population of an area?	No	
36.	Affect life-styles, or neighborhood character or stability?	No	
37.	Affect minority, elderly, handicapped, transit-dependent, or other specific interest groups?	No	
38.	Divide or disrupt an established community?	No	
39.	Affect existing housing, require the acquisition of residences, displace people, or create a demand for additional housing?	No	
40.	Affect employment, industry or commerce, or require the displacement of businesses or farms?	Yes	No
41.	Affect property values or the local tax base?	No	
42.	Affect any community facilities (including medical, educational, scientific, recreational, or religious institutions, ceremonial sites or sacred shrines)?	No	
43.	Affect public utilities, or police, fire, emergency or other public services?	Yes	No
44.	Have a substantial impact on existing transportation systems or alter present patterns of circulation or movement of people and/or goods?	Yes	No
45.	Generate additional traffic?	No	
46.	Affect or be affected by existing parking facilities or result in demand of new parking?	No	
47.	Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?	No	
48.	Involve a substantial risk of an explosion or the release of hazardous substances in the event of an accident, or otherwise adversely affect overall public safety?	No	
49.	Result in alterations to waterborne, rail or air traffic?	No	

50.	Support large commercial or residential development?	No	
51.	Affect a significant archaeological or historic site, structure, object, or building?	No	
52.	Affect wild or scenic rivers or natural landmarks?	No	
53.	Affect any scenic resources, result in the obstruction of any scenic vista or view open to the public, or create an aesthetically offensive site open to public view?	Yes	No
54.	Result in substantial impacts associated with construction activities (e.g., noise, dust, temporary drainage, traffic detours and temporary access, etc.)?	Yes	No
55.	Result in the use of any publicly owned land from a park, recreation area, or wildlife and waterfowl refuge?	No	

MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE		Yes or No	If Yes, is it significant? Yes or No
Will the proposal (directly or indirectly):			
56.	Have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause fish or wildlife populations to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate or reduce the number of a plant or animal community, restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	No	
57.	Have the potential to achieve short-term goals to the disadvantage of long-term environmental impacts?	No	
58.	Have environmental effects that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? Cumulatively considerable means that the incremental effects of an individual project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past, current, and future projects. It includes the effects of other projects that interact with this project, and together are considerable.	No	
59.	Have environmental effects that will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings?	No	

5. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

5.1 *Physical*

Will the proposal (either directly or indirectly):

1. Appreciably change the topography or ground surface relief features?

Less than significant impact. Freeway embankments will be re-graded from existing 1:2 horizontal:vertical slopes to the prescribed 1:4 grades. The proposed alternatives will add to an existing roadway. The addition of the extra lanes will require the expansion of the existing prism of the road. Due to the presence of the existing roadbed, no features will be added that are not currently present.

2. Destroy, cover, or modify any unique geologic or physical features?

No impact. No unique geologic or physical features will be disturbed.

3. Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource or locally important mineral resource recovery site that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?

No impact. No mineral resource sites are present.

4. Result in unstable earth surfaces or increase the exposure of people or property to geologic or seismic hazards?

No impact. Geologic processes, which have caused earthquakes in the past, can be expected to continue. Seismic events, which are likely to produce the greatest bedrock accelerations, could be a moderate event on the Newport-Inglewood fault zone and/or a large event on a distant active fault. Differential settlement resulting from earthquake shaking may take place along the proposed fill slopes.

There are no geological or geotechnical conditions that would preclude the construction of this project. The construction of this project will have no adverse effect on the existing environmental conditions.

Caltrans builds to current earthquake standards and will use best engineering practices to minimize damage from ground shaking. These standards have been established to reduce the damage from seismic activity which will reduce the potential for impacts to the public.

5. Result in or be affected by soil erosion or siltation (whether by water or wind)?

Less than significant impact. The Physical Environmental Report found that construction activities will expose small amounts of soil to water erosion. Storm-water runoff will not affect surface water quality. All construction projects are required to include Best Management Practices, which, in part, are designed to protect surface water quality. Erosion control measures will also be implemented in compliance with NPDES permit requirements. Adherence with these measures should minimize potential impacts to surface waters and water quality.

6. Result in the increased use of fuel or energy in large amounts or in a wasteful manner?

7. Result in an increase in the rate of use of any natural resource?

8. Result in the substantial depletion of any nonrenewable resource?

No impact. Adding HOV lanes will help alleviate congestion and also be part of a regional strategy to promote bus ridership, carpools and vanpools to reduce air pollution. Carpooling reduces Vehicle Miles Traveled, and produces smoother traffic flow, which results in a reduction in the use of fuel, causing a decrease in air pollution and energy consumption. As a measure to minimize disposal of non-renewable resources, this project proposes to salvage the existing bridge railings.

9. Violate any published Federal, State, or local standards pertaining to hazardous waste, solid waste or litter control?

No impact. There is a potential for hazardous waste contamination located within the project site. However, any contaminated materials that are found will be handled and disposed of per current standards.

In order to comply with the current standards, the project will require a Lead Site Investigation to determine the level of aerially deposited lead contamination in the unpaved areas requiring excavation. If any excess parcels are acquired a Site Investigation is warranted to determine if any asbestos, lead paint, or other contaminants are present. An asbestos survey is recommended for the five bridges in the project area. It is anticipated that contaminated groundwater may be encountered during the construction of retaining walls, therefore de-watering would be necessary in order to stop the contaminated water from being discharged into the surface water. Any contaminated soil, asbestos, lead paint, or groundwater that is found will be handled and disposed of properly.

There will be no adverse effect on the local or regional physical environment by solid wastes generated during construction or operation of the proposed improvements.

10. Modify a bay, inlet, lake, channel of a river or stream, or the bed of the ocean?

No impact. There are no bays, inlets, lakes, rivers, or oceans in the project area.

11. Encroach upon a floodplain or result in or be affected by floodwaters or tidal waves?

No impact. The proposed project is located in a non-flood hazard area. The Federal Emergency Management Agency classifies the project area as Zone C which means that it is an “area of minimal flooding.”

12. Adversely affect the quantity or quality of surface water, groundwater, or public water supply?

No impact. The Physical Environmental Report found that there would be no adverse impact on water quality in the study area. However, the project will marginally increase storm water runoff into the nearby drainage channels and other water related resources which constitute the San Gabriel Valley Watershed. The proposed project will also slightly increase traffic capacity of the freeway corridor and the amount of impervious surfaces. Runoff from impervious roadway surfaces contains residue from fuel, oil, and tire wear. Since the proposed project is in a well-developed, urban area, the incremental increase in impervious surface is not anticipated to substantially increase the existing pollutant levels in the local surface waters.

According to the Natural Environment Study Report, there are no natural drainages within the project limits. Man-made freeway drainage facilities will be modified. No flood control facilities will be impacted by this project. For both short-term and long-term water quality impacts, temporary as well as permanent Best Management Practices (BMPs) will be identified during final design when there is sufficient engineering details available to warrant competent analysis. Caltrans is committed to implementing cost-effective temporary and permanent BMPs as identified during final design.

A Notice of Construction shall be filed with the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board (LAWQCB) 180 days in advance of construction, in accordance with the guidelines set forth by the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. In addition, if lead-contaminated soil will be reused, the Site Investigation report shall be provided to the LAWQCB at the time of the Notice of Construction filing to determine if Water Discharge Requirements are necessary.

13. Result in the use of water in large amounts or in a wasteful manner?

No impact. The proposed project does not involve the use of water.

14. Affect wetlands or riparian vegetation?

No impact. There are no wetlands or riparian vegetation in the project area.

15. Violate or be inconsistent with Federal, State, or local water quality standards?

No impact. The proposed project will comply with all current water quality standards. There are no natural drainages within the project limits, however man-made freeway drainage facilities will be modified, and Best Management Practices to protect surface water quality will be applied. If needed, erosion control measures will also be implemented in compliance with NPDES permit requirements. Adherence with these measures should minimize potential impacts to surface waters and water quality.

16. Result in changes in air movement, moisture, or temperature, or any climatic conditions?

No impact. Adding an HOV lane and auxiliary lanes will not result in any climatic changes.

17. Result in an increase in air pollutant emissions, adverse effects on or deterioration of ambient air quality?

18. Result in the creation of objectionable odors?

No impact. Adding HOV lanes will help alleviate congestion and also be part of a regional strategy to promote bus ridership, carpools and vanpools to reduce air pollution. Carpooling reduces Vehicle Miles Traveled, and produces smoother traffic flow, which results in a reduction in air pollution and energy consumption.

Based on the results of numerous air quality studies involving the addition of HOV lanes, none of the build alternatives will have a significant effect on the environment, or expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations. According to the Physical Environmental Report, none of the build alternatives will increase ambient carbon monoxide levels in a manner that will produce air quality violations. Current and projected measurements indicate that the one-hour and the eight-hour standards will not be exceeded. This project will not cause or contribute to any new localized carbon monoxide violations or increase its frequency or severity.

FHWA currently requires a qualitative PM₁₀ analysis for all non-exempt projects in PM₁₀ non-attainment areas. Since this project is located in a PM₁₀ non-attainment area, a PM₁₀ qualitative analysis is required. Air quality summaries, published by the Air Resources Board and the South Coast Air Quality Management District, for 1997-1999 were used in the PM₁₀ qualitative analysis. Readings were taken from the Hawthorne Monitoring Station, the closest station to the project that monitors PM₁₀. The summary showed that no violations were monitored during the three-year period.

There is no reason to believe that the proposed project will contribute in a hot spot fashion to any known violations. Regional conformity already accounts for PM₁₀ emissions from regional Vehicle Miles Traveled. Studies performed by Caltrans and University of California, Davis indicate that the project does not cause or contribute to any new localized PM₁₀ violations or increase the frequency or severity of any existing PM₁₀ violations in the area.

The proposed project will not cause odors, with the exception of temporary odors of asphalt during construction.

19. Violate or be inconsistent with Federal, State, or local air standards or control plans?

No impact. The Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 require that transportation plans, programs, and projects that are funded by or approved under Title 23 USC or the Federal Transit Act conform to State or Federal Air Quality Plans. In order to be found to conform, a project must come from approved transportation plans and programs such as the State Implementation Plan (SIP), the RTP and the RTIP.

Conformity Statement

The proposed project is consistent with the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) 1998 RTP, which was adopted by SCAG on June 16, 1998 and approved by FHWA on July 19, 1998.

The auxiliary lane portion of this project is identified in the 2000 Regional Transportation Improvement Program; however, the HOV lane portion of this project was not. Caltrans is currently coordinating with MTA and SCAG to add the HOV portion to the auxiliary lane portion to the 2000 RTIP (Appendix G). Upon inclusion of the HOV lane into the amended 2000 RTIP, and U.S. DOT (FHWA/FTA) approval of the 2000 TIP, this project will be in conformance with the requirements of the Federal Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990.

The proposed project is located in the South Coast Air Basin (SCAB) which is a nonattainment area for both the Carbon Monoxide (CO) and PM₁₀ State and Federal standards. Since the project is not identified on the EPA's list of exempt projects (40 CFR § 93.126), this project may be subject to a CO and PM₁₀ hot spot analysis to determine localized effects.³¹

Temporary air quality impacts from construction activities will occur. Federal Conformity Requirements state that hot spot analyses are not required to consider construction related activities that cause temporary increases in emissions. The regulations consider these activities temporary if they occur during the construction phase and last five years or less at any individual site. Project construction will be conducted in

³¹ Leann Williams, Caltrans Transportation Planning, E-mail correspondence, September 19, 2000.

accordance with all Federal, State, and local regulations that govern construction activities and emissions.

20. Result in an increase in noise levels or vibration for adjoining areas?

21. Result in any Federal, State, or local noise criteria being equal or exceeded?

Less than significant impact. The Noise Study Report indicates that sensitive receptors are located within the project area. To mitigate the impacts of these sensitive receptors, soundwalls are proposed throughout the project area to decrease the noise impacts to a level that is compliant with the Federal Noise Criteria.

Noise impacts of the project were determined and mitigation was recommended where reasonable and feasible. The Noise Analysis Summary in Table 5-1 provides summary tables of noise measurements and location descriptions. Final soundwall height and length would be determined during final design, with the stipulation that FHWA and Caltrans noise abatement criteria would be achieved at these locations. The wall heights indicated in Table 5-1 represent the nominal vertical dimension above the edge of traveled way elevation. If the recommended wall heights are used, future noise levels for residents and businesses will be lower than the existing level. However, the final decision regarding soundwall location and design is subject to public input from the affected residents and the cost effectiveness calculation by the Project Engineer during final design. Figure 5-1 indicates the location of the proposed soundwalls.

The patio area of Big Tomy's Restaurant at the corner of Sawtelle and West Pico Boulevards may experience freeway noise. Noise barriers on the freeway would not insulate the restaurant because the surface streets adjacent to it are a major source of noise. Since soundwalls will not help minimize noise from the streets, and the 1998 Caltrans Traffic Noise Analysis Protocol, Article 2.83 (d) states that noise abatement is normally not considered reasonable for commercial areas, no further investigation measures will be conducted for this site.

A soundwall is not recommended for the mainline segment of I-405 above the Santa Monica Boulevard undercrossing. Studies show that no reasonable noise reduction could be achieved by installing soundwalls on the mainline because the buildings on Santa Monica Blvd. are below the level of the freeway. The soundwall from Wilshire to Ohio Ave. that was proposed in the PSR will be built as part of the widening project that will take place on northbound I-405. There will also be a soundwall located along the westbound I-10 to northbound I-405 connector as part of the HOV project taking place on I-405 from I-10 to State Route 90.

22. Produce new light, glare, or shadows?

No impact. The proposed project and alternatives would add to the existing roadway, and establish soundwalls within the state right of way. There would be no substantial light, glare, or shadow impacts on residences, motorists, or other sensitive receptors.

Table 5-1 – Noise Analysis Summary, November 1999

Site #	Direction on I-405	Limits	Existing Noise Level	Existing Wall Height	Predicted Noise Levels for the Year 2024 Barrier Height Alternatives*					
					dBA w/ No Wall	[8']	[10']	[12']	[14']	[16']
						2.44m	3.05m	3.66m	4.27m	4.88m
S-101	South	North of Olympic Blvd to Santa	69		71	68*	67	65	(64)	63
S-102	South	Monica Blvd on-ramp	70		72	69*	68	66	(65)	64
S-103	South	North of Santa Monica Blvd to north of Ohio Ave	67		73	66*	65	64	(63)	62
S-104	South	North of Constitution Ave to Waterford St	73		74	72*	70	68	67	(66)
S-105	South	North of Waterford St	73		74	71*	69	68	(67)	65
S-106	South		71	3.05**	77	73	71*	70	(68)	67
N-201	North	North of Ohio Ave to Wilshire	69		70	66*	64	(63)	62	61
N-202	North	Blvd off-ramp	72		74	68*	66	(65)	63	62

() = Caltrans wall height recommendations

Caltrans minimum requirements: 5 dBA(Leq) noise reduction, 2.44m (8') wall height, achieve 67 dBA (Leq) or less

* = Lowest height that breaks line-of-sight between 3.50m (11.5') truck stack and receptor

** = Existing wall to be replaced because of widening

Figure 5-1 – Soundwalls



5.2 Biological

Will the proposal (either directly or indirectly):

23. Change the diversity of species or number of any species (including trees, shrubs, grass, microflora, and aquatic plants)?

Less than significant impact. Due to the urban surroundings, this area is not considered prime wildlife habitat and impacts from either alternative would not be considerable. The primary difference between the two alternatives lies in the ramp configurations of the Wilshire Blvd. interchange. Both alternatives would result in the removal of several large trees, but there will be differences in the number and location of the trees removed. After construction, all disturbed areas should be revegetated in compliance with Executive Order 13112, Invasive Species.

Part of the project is one mile away from the Santa Monica Mountains, and it is quite possible for the seeds of landscape plants to disperse into this area. In order to maintain the diversity of species of this natural area, landscaping should comply with a policy developed by Caltrans and US Fish and Wildlife Service, which combats the introduction of invasive species into native ecosystems. The policy discourages the use of exotic plants near wildlands because they may escape, colonize, or hybridize with native species. A list of exotic invasive species that should not be used as highway landscaping due to potential adverse effects on native ecosystems has been developed in Table 5-2.

Table 5-2 – Exotic Plant Species Not To Be Planted on Caltrans Right-of-Way

Scientific Name (origin)	Common Name	Family
Aptenia cordifolia (S. Africa)	Dew plant	Aizoaceae
Arctotheca calendula (S. Africa)	Capeweed	Asteraceae
Arctotis stoechadifolia (S. Africa)	Large-flowered African daisy	Asteraceae
Carpobrotus edulis (S. Africa)	Hottentot fig	Aizoaceae
Carpobrotus chinensis (S. Africa)	Sea fig	Aizoaceae
Cistus spp. (Europe)	Rock rose	Cistaceae
Cytisus spp. (Europe)	Scotch or Spanish broom	Fabaceae
Coreopsis gigantea (N.CA hybridizes w/S.CA Sea dahlia)	Giant sea dahlia	Asteraceae
Cortaderia spp. (Chile/Argentina)	Pampas grass	Poaceae
Dimorphotheca sinuata (S. Africa)	Cape marigold	Asteraceae
Drosanthemum spp. (S. Africa)	Rosea iceplant	Aizoaceae
Eucalyptus globosus (Australia)	Blue gum	Myrtaceae
Gazania linearis (S. Africa)	Gazania	Asteraceae
Genista spp. (Canary Islands)	Broom	Fabaceae
Hedera helix (Eurasia)	English ivy	Araliaceae
Lampranthus coccineus (S. Africa)	Ice plant	Aizoaceae
Malephora crocea (S. Africa)	Croceum ice plant	Aizoaceae
Osteospermum ecklonis (S. Africa)	African daisy	Asteraceae
Pennisetum spp. (Africa)	Fountain grass	Poaceae
Schinus molle (S. America)	Peruvian pepper tree	Anacardiaceae
Schinus terebinthifolius (S. America)	Brazilian pepper tree	Anacardiaceae
Spartium junceum (Med)	Spanish broom	Fabaceae
Trifolium fragiferum (Europe)	Strawberry clover	Fabaceae
Trifolium hirtum 'Hyron' (cultivar)	Hyron rose clover	Fabaceae
Vinca major (Europe)	Greater periwinkle	Apocynaceae

- 24. Reduce or encroach upon the critical habitat of any unique, threatened, or endangered plant species?**
- 29. Reduce or encroach upon the critical habitat of any unique, threatened, or endangered animal species?**

No impact. According to the Natural Environment Study Report, there are no sensitive species known, or likely to occur within the area.

- 25. Introduce new species of plants into an area, or result in a barrier to the normal replenishment of existing species?**

No impact. After construction, landscaping will be done in compliance with Executive Order 13112, Invasive Species. New species of plants will not be introduced, and barriers blocking replenishment will not occur. Caltrans, with assistance from US Fish and Wildlife Service, developed a policy to combat the introduction of exotic species into native ecosystems. The policy states that Caltrans is encouraged to:

1. Use regionally appropriate native plant materials wherever possible, and
2. Avoid the use of non-native plant materials in areas near natural open space or wildlands, which may escape and colonize, or hybridize with native species.

A list of exotic invasive species that should not be used as highway landscaping due to potential adverse effects on native ecosystems has also been developed in Table 5-1.

- 26. Reduce the acreage of any agricultural crop or commercial timber stands, or affect prime, unique, or other farmland of State or local importance?**

No impact. The project is located in an urbanized area, and there is no agricultural land present.

- 27. Result in removal or deterioration of existing fish or wildlife habitat?**
- 31. Introduce new species of animals into the area, or result in a barrier to the migration or movement of animals?**

Less than significant impact. During construction of the proposed project, a large number of trees would be removed. Because trees provide nesting habitat for many birds, tree removal should be scheduled to occur outside of the nesting season, if at all possible (nesting season in the Los Angeles area is approximately between April 1 and September 1). If this is not possible, a pre-construction survey for nesting birds will need to be conducted. If nesting birds are found to be present, coordination with the California Department of Fish and Game will be required prior to disturbance so that an appropriate course of action can be developed.

The proposed project will not introduce any new species of animals into the area. Tree removal may affect the movement of animals already present, but if the above conditions are met, this impact will be less than significant.

- 28. Change the diversity of species, or number of any species of animals (birds, land animals, reptiles, fish and shellfish, benthic organisms, insects, or microfauna)?**

No impact. The proposed project will not change the diversity, or number of animal species.

- 30. Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan, natural community conservation plan or other approved local, regional or state habitat plan?**

No impact. The proposed project is located in an urbanized area that is not under any conservation or habitat plans.

5.3 Social and Economic

Will the proposal (directly or indirectly):

- 32. Cause disruption of orderly planned development?**
33. Be inconsistent with any elements of adopted community plans, policies or goals?

No impact. The proposal will not disrupt any planned development. The project is included in plans to improve the traffic congestion in the project area. The proposed project is of the highest priority in the Southern California Traffic Operations Program Strategies plan (TOPS), whose primary objective is to optimize the carrying capacity of the freeway network. It has also been listed in Governor Gray Davis' Traffic Congestion Relief Plan for Los Angeles.

- 34. Be inconsistent with a Coastal Zone Management Plan?**

No impact. The proposed project is not located within the coastal zone. Therefore, it will not be inconsistent with the Coastal Zone Management Plan.

- 35. Affect the location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population of an area?**
36. Affect life-styles, or neighborhood character or stability?
38. Divide or disrupt an established community?

No impact. The proposed project involves work within Caltrans right-of-way. Temporary easements will be required for construction purposes, but they will not result in a long-term impact. No private residences will be adversely impacted; therefore, no neighborhoods will be divided or permanently disrupted.

37. Affect minority, elderly, handicapped, transit-dependent, or other specific interest groups?

No impact. No adverse effects would occur as a result of the proposed project on minority groups, the elderly, handicapped, transit-dependent, or other special interest groups. Executive Order 12898³² requires federal agencies to take the appropriate and necessary steps to identify and address “disproportionately high and adverse effects” of projects on the health or environment of minority and low-income populations to the greatest extent practicable and permitted by law. No disproportionately high and adverse impacts to minority or low-income populations have been identified.

39. Affect existing housing, require the acquisition of residences, displace people, or create a demand for additional housing?

No impact. No residences will be displaced or acquired by implementing the proposed project. The project will not create a demand for additional housing.

40. Will the proposal affect employment, industry or commerce, or require the displacement of businesses or farms?

Less than significant impact. According to the Draft Relocation Impact Report, the acquisition of real estate property for the proposed project would have a slight impact on the surrounding communities.

The Wilshire Option B proposes to widen the southbound I-405 off-ramp to westbound Wilshire. This would require the partial acquisition of the maintenance yard for the Veteran’s Administration property near this interchange. The affected parcel is privately owned by Westech Energy Corporation.

Olympic Alternative B would require one business to be relocated. The potential commercial displacement consists of one furniture design studio located at 11240 West Olympic Blvd. Olympic Alternative A would require the parcel’s business to be disrupted while construction takes place. If replacement property was required for more than one business in the project area, the search for a replacement property could be problematic. It is not anticipated that job displacement in the project area will be a problematic issue. Therefore, no significant impact can be attributed to the proposed project, or have an effect on the economy of the community.

41. Affect property values or the local tax base?

No impact. The proposed project will improve traffic flow along southbound I-405 by adding a HOV lane and auxiliary lanes within the state right-of-way. Since the proposed project is adjacent to the existing roadway, this improvement should not significantly affect property values, or the local tax base.

³² Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low Income Populations, February 11, 1994.

42. Affect any community facilities (including medical, educational, scientific, recreational, or religious institutions, ceremonial sites or sacred shrines)?

No impact. The locations identified in Section 3.12 are the community facilities nearest to the proposed project. The proposal should not impact any of these sites.

43. Affect public utilities, or police, fire, emergency or other public services?

Less than significant impact. Caltrans Utilities Engineering Department's initial review of utilities in the project area revealed the existence of two utilities. An 8" gas line and a 6" oil line run parallel to the existing right-of-way for 60 meters between stations 510 and 511. If right-of-way will be acquired in this area, the two facilities will need to be relocated.

Alternative 2, Wilshire Option B proposes to consolidate the I-405 off-ramps at Wilshire Blvd. The directional off-ramp to westbound Wilshire will be widened to accommodate traffic generated from the proposed closed loop off-ramp. Traffic for west and eastbound Wilshire will be directed to the widened ramp. This ramp terminus will be signalized to allow access to both directions of Wilshire. Signalizing Wilshire Blvd. may create traffic backup on the freeway ramp and city streets, delaying the response time of emergency vehicles.

44. Have a substantial impact on existing transportation systems or alter present patterns of circulation or movement of people and/or goods?

45. Generate additional traffic?

Less than significant impact. Alternative 2 proposes to close the on-ramp to southbound I-405 from Waterford Street. This would alter the circulation pattern for drivers who utilize this ramp, redirecting them to either the Sunset Boulevard or Wilshire Blvd. on-ramp. Under Alternative 2, Wilshire Option B, the circulation system around Wilshire Blvd. would be altered and possibly create more congested on ramps and local streets. While construction takes place on the Olympic Blvd. off-ramp it will be closed for an extended period of time. A detour plan will be developed to assist drivers during this temporary impact.

Although there may be a period of transition for drivers to become familiarized with the new system, the overall impact should be a reduction in unsafe weaving and an increase in flow on the mainline I-405. The proposed project will improve the public transportation system provided by Santa Monica's Big Blue Bus and LADOT's Commuter Express. The addition of southbound HOV lanes will help provide faster service for the Big Blue Bus routes that end at UCLA and the Getty Center by enabling them to reach their southern starting points more quickly by way of the San Diego Freeway.

Additional traffic will not be generated since the project only improves an existing facility.

46. Affect or be affected by existing parking facilities or result in demand of new parking?

No impact. The addition of freeway lanes should not affect parking facilities, or require more parking.

47. Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?

No impact. A portion of the proposed project is located approximately one mile from a relatively undeveloped area of the Santa Monica Mountains. Fires may occur in these wildlands, but the proposed project will not increase the risk of loss, injury or death to people.

48. Involve a substantial risk of an explosion or the release of hazardous substances in the event of an accident, or otherwise adversely affect overall public safety?

No impact. Initial hazardous waste studies have found that aerially deposited lead, asbestos, and contaminated water may already be present within the project area. These hazardous materials will be handled and disposed of per all current federal, state, and local regulations, and the public safety will not be at risk. The Initial Site Assessment for hazardous substances found that soil within the project area is contaminated with aerially deposited lead. In order to determine the level of contamination along the I-405 shoulder, a Lead Site Investigation, and proper handling and disposal of the soil is recommended.

The five bridges within the project limits are suspected to contain asbestos in the expansion joints. The Caltrans Office of Environmental Engineering and Feasibility Studies recommends conducting an asbestos survey.

It is also anticipated that de-watering may be necessary during the construction of the retaining wall at I-405 Olympic Boulevard off-ramp. In the case that the groundwater is contaminated at a concentration greater than the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System effluent standard, it would be unsuitable for discharge into the surface water.

Any contaminated soil, asbestos, lead paint, or contaminated groundwater that is found will be handled and disposed of properly.

49. Result in alterations to waterborne, rail or air traffic?

No impact. The implementation of the proposed HOV and auxiliary lanes will not impact waterborne, rail, or air traffic.

50. Support large commercial or residential development?

No impact. The I-405 freeway traverses an already developed area. Therefore, the additions to the existing mainline will not support commercial or residential development.

51. Affect a significant archaeological or historic site, structure object, or building?

No impact. The Archaeological Survey Report found no prehistoric or historic archaeological sites located within the project area. Should cultural materials be uncovered during construction, it is Caltrans policy to discontinue work in the area of the find until the material can be evaluated by a Caltrans archaeologist.³³ Should project plans change to include unsurveyed areas, additional archaeological reconnaissance will be required.

The Historical Property Survey Report found that no significant historic sites or buildings are located within the project area. The State Historic Preservation Officer approved these findings in a letter of concurrence, which is located in Appendix C.

52. Affect wild or scenic rivers or natural landmarks?

No impact. There are no rivers or natural landmarks located within this highly urbanized section of Los Angeles.

53. Affect any scenic resources, result in the obstruction of any scenic vista or view open to the public, or create an aesthetically offensive site open to public view?

Less than significant impact. The proposed alternatives will not interfere with any scenic views. Some viewpoints along local streets, such as VP-2 which was referred to in Section 3.15, will be improved slightly with the addition of a soundwall that will obscure most of the traffic from view. The addition of soundwalls would slightly impact viewpoints on southbound I-405, such as VP-1, because the man-made elements would be more dominant. The corridor has an existing soundwall north of the proposed project that reflects the art-deco character of 1930s federal projects within the adjacent Veterans Administration property. It is recommended that this wall should be matched for the future improvements. See Figures 5-2 and 5-3 for visualizations of the existing and proposed conditions.

The Veterans Park organization has requested that Caltrans consider a number of proposals to improve the Veterans Parkway (Section 6.4 – Comments). Caltrans Office of Design has concluded that some of the proposals are outside the limits and scope of the project. However, they will consider planting vegetation that will complement the

³³ Caltrans, Environmental Handbook, Volume 2, Chapter 7, Section 7-8, October 1991.

landscaping being added as part of the overall Veterans Parkway plan, installing signs to announce the “Veterans Parkway,” and improving and cleaning the infrastructure of the I-405/Wilshire Blvd. interchange. If any lighting, landscaping, or local streets are disturbed by the project either permanently or temporarily, Caltrans will work with Veterans Park to restore them appropriately.

Figure 5-2 – Visual Impact at View Point #1 (Southbound I-405 Near Wilshire Boulevard)

EXISTING



PROPOSED



Figure 5-3 – Visual Impact at View Point #2 (Southbound I-405 On Beloit Avenue Near Santa Monica Boulevard)

EXISTING



PROPOSED



54. Will the proposal result in substantial impacts associated with construction activities (e.g., noise, dust, temporary drainage, traffic detours and temporary access, etc.)?

Less than significant impact. There will be short term noise, dust, easements and access problems which may result from construction of this proposed project.

Noise

The project coordinator will be required to comply with all local noise level rules, regulations and ordinances as well as the State's Standard Specifications³⁴ restricting noise levels. The impact of noise generated by construction equipment will be controlled by restricting operating times to periods of normal waking hours by standard specifications and local ordinances. Construction of this project may require use of equipment that has high noise characteristics. Typically, the equipment ranges from concrete mixers to jackhammers, which produce noise levels in the 80 to 90 dBA range at a distance of 50 feet. To reduce the impact of this noise, construction activities should be confined to the daily period least disturbing to the business community.

Dust

Fugitive dust and particulate matter, including particulate matter less than ten microns in size (PM₁₀), and emissions generated during project excavation and filling will be controlled by the contractor. This will be done in accordance with the provisions in the State of California Department of Transportation Standard Specification Section 7, "Legal Relations and Responsibilities," specifically 7-1.01F titled "Air Pollution Control." The contractor will also be responsible for the construction equipment and off-site vehicles used for hauling debris and supplies to minimize the production of construction emissions. Project construction will be conducted in accordance to all Federal, State, and local regulations that govern construction activities and emissions from construction vehicles. The menu of mitigation measures comprise of the following:

1. Stabilize construction roads and dirt piles with water twice daily.
2. Limit speeds on unpaved construction roads to 15 mph.
3. Daily removal of dirt spilled onto paved roads.
4. Cease grading and excavation activities when wind speeds exceed 25 miles per hour and during extreme air pollution episodes.
5. Require covering of all haul trucks.
6. Phased grading to minimize the area of disturbed soils.
7. Phase construction activities to minimize daily emissions.
8. Proper maintenance of construction vehicles to maximize efficiency and minimize emissions.
9. Prompt re-vegetation of roadsides.

³⁴ State of California Business, Transportation and Housing Agency, Department of Transportation, Standard Specifications, Section 7, July 1999.

While emissions from construction activities and equipment are an unavoidable consequence of project construction, an aggressive mitigation plan will serve to minimize impacts to ambient air quality and the nuisance impacts to the public in proximity to the project corridor.

Drainage

Waste material removed from the construction area will be disposed of in accordance with the Standard Specifications listed in the California Administrative Code. Erosion control will require that no siltation from the construction site be allowed to enter the flood control channels or drainage system. Any impacts will be temporary, local, and limited to construction areas.

Traffic

Temporary traffic delays can be expected during construction of the project. During construction at the Olympic Blvd. off-ramp, the ramp will be closed for an extended period of time. A Traffic Management Plan (TMP) will be developed and incorporated as part of the project design prior to the onset of construction to minimize disruption to the existing traffic flow conditions. Time delay will be related primarily to daytime traffic since traffic volumes are much higher during the day.

There will also be no major impacts on air quality due to construction related delays. A TMP will be implemented to notify the public of upcoming construction activities in an effort to reduce the volume of traffic through the affected area. The TMP will also provide motorists with alternate routes around any construction-related delays. This decrease in traffic volume will decrease the amount of congestion experienced.

55. Result in the use of any publicly owned land from a park, recreation area, or wildlife and waterfowl refuge?

No impact. Wilshire Option B would require the acquisition of approximately 890 m² (9580 ft²) of the Veterans Administration maintenance yard at Wilshire Blvd. for the widening of the off-ramp. However, this parcel of land is privately owned. Alternative 2 would also require a temporary construction easement at this same location. Since this portion of Veterans Administration is a privately owned maintenance yard, there will be no impact on a public park, recreation area, or refuge.

5.4 Mandatory Findings of Significance

Will the proposal (directly or indirectly):

56. Have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate

a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?

No impact. The proposed project will improve the quality of the environment. The addition of HOV and auxiliary lanes will improve traffic flow, encourage ridesharing and decrease stop-and-go conditions. This in turn will save fuel, reduce vehicle emissions, and improve air quality. The construction of soundwalls at various locations on I-405 will reduce the noise levels experienced by nearby residents and businesses. Since the project is located in a highly urbanized area there is little fish, wildlife, or plant life present. It is not expected to eliminate examples of California history or prehistory.

57. Have the potential to achieve short-term goals to the disadvantage of long-term environmental impacts?

No impact. Many aspects of the proposed project area have been researched, and the technical studies include both the existing conditions and future projections. The project would have short-term negative construction impacts but these would not contribute to a cumulative adverse effect on a broader area; the effects would be localized. When taken in its operational context, the proposed project, acting in concert with other HOV projects, is expected to have the beneficial effect of aiding the reduction in air emissions and improving transportation efficiency.

58. Have environmental effects that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? Cumulatively considerable means that the incremental effects of an individual project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past, current and future projects. It includes the effects of other projects that interact with this project, and together are considerable.

No impact. The proposed project will close the HOV gap on southbound I-405, improving the operations of this HOV lane that will extend throughout Los Angeles County. It would result in temporary construction impacts related to noise, air quality, and local traffic disruptions. These effects would be temporary and would not cause substantial negative effects on the physical, biological or socio-economic environment.

59. Have environmental effects that will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings?

No impact. The proposed project may result in temporary construction impacts related to noise, air quality, and local traffic disruptions. These effects would be short term, and will be minimized to the degree possible. Please see Question 54 for discussions of these temporary construction impacts. These temporary effects will not have a substantial negative effect on human beings.

6. LIST OF PREPARERS

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Lorna Foster, Right of Way Agent

7. LIST OF AGENCIES, ORGANIZATIONS, AND PERSONS TO WHOM COPIES OF THE DOCUMENT ARE SENT

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Representative, District 32
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Monterey Park, CA 91755

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Mr. Jonathan Bishop
Regional Water Quality Control Board
L.A. Basin (Region 4)
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Los Angeles, CA 90013

Mr. Barry R. Wallerstein, Executive Officer
South Coast Air Quality Management District
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Diamond Bar, CA 91765

Mr. Mark A. Pisano, Executive Director
Southern California Association of Governments
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12th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90017

Mr. David R. Solow, Chief Executive Officer
Southern California Regional Rail Authority
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Suite 2600
Los Angeles, CA 90017

Ms. Maxine Harrison, Southern CA Representative
State of California Public Utilities Commission
320 West 4th Street
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Los Angeles, CA 90013

Local Facilities and Interested Individuals

Director
Los Angeles National Cemetery
950 S. Sepulveda Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90049

Mr. Paul Casey, Sr. Transit Program Analyst
Santa Monica Big Blue Bus
1660 Seventh St.
Santa Monica, CA 90401

Los Angeles Region Director
Veterans Administration
11000 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90024

Ms. Susan C. Young, Director
Veterans Park
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Los Angeles, CA 90095-1405

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Brentwood Glen Association
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Los Angeles, CA 90049

Ms. Jackie Carter, Manager
VPSI Commuter Vanpools
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Chatsworth, CA 91311

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West Los Angeles Regional Library
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Westwood Fire Station
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Los Angeles, CA 90024

Chief
West Los Angeles Fire Station
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Captain Michael Hillmann, Area Commanding
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St. John's Presbyterian Church
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Director
Westwood Park and Recreation Center
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Los Angeles, CA 90025

Director
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Los Angeles, CA 90025

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Los Angeles, CA 90025

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Japanese Institute of Sawtelle
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Los Angeles, CA 90049

Ms. Bobbi Fiedler
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Northridge, CA 91325

8. COMMENTS AND COORDINATION

8.1 *Scoping Process*

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulations do not require an Initial Study/Environmental Assessment (IS/EA) to include formal scoping procedures. However, efforts were undertaken to ensure that the concerns of the public were known early in the process and incorporated into the environmental analysis for the proposed project. Scoping for this project was conducted to solicit public comments on the proposed project, and to insure the early involvement of public agencies, interested groups, and individuals.

The scoping process for this project consisted of direct mailings on January 10, 2000 to the appropriate elected officials and public agencies that may be affected. A sample letter is seen in Figure 6-1. In addition, advertisements for public comments ran on Sunday, January 16, 2000 in several local newspapers (Figure 6-2). *Our Times* in the Santa Monica edition of the *Los Angeles Times*, the San Fernando Valley's *Daily News*, and the Spanish-language *La Opinión*, were the newspapers selected because their readers would be the most likely to be affected by the proposed project.

In an effort to improve circulation at the I-405/Wilshire Blvd. interchange, Caltrans has been working with Los Angeles Department of Transportation officials. Caltrans also held a meeting on October 24, 2000 to discuss the proposed elimination of the Waterford Street on-ramp with local officials and the Brentwood Glen Homeowners Association.

8.2 *Community Meeting*

A public meeting will be held to present the viable alternatives to the public for comment. The meeting will be held on May 10, 2001 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Holiday Inn Brentwood, 170 North Church Lane. The details of the meeting will be advertised in local newspapers and the Caltrans website (www.dot.ca.gov/dist07/). If you have any comments, or would like to be added to the mailing list please write to:

Mr. Ronald J. Kosinski, Chief
Office of Environmental Planning
Department of Transportation (Caltrans)
120 South Spring Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

8.3 *Public Comment Period for the Initial Study/Environmental Assessment*

The IS/EA document is being circulated for public comment. Written comments on this document will be accepted for a period of 45 days. Copies of this document can be reviewed at the Caltrans District 7 Office located at 120 South Spring Street, Los Angeles 90012, the West Los Angeles Regional Library located at 11360 Santa Monica Boulevard, Los Angeles, 90025, or the Caltrans website (www.dot.ca.gov/dist07/).

Figure 8-1 – Scoping Letter




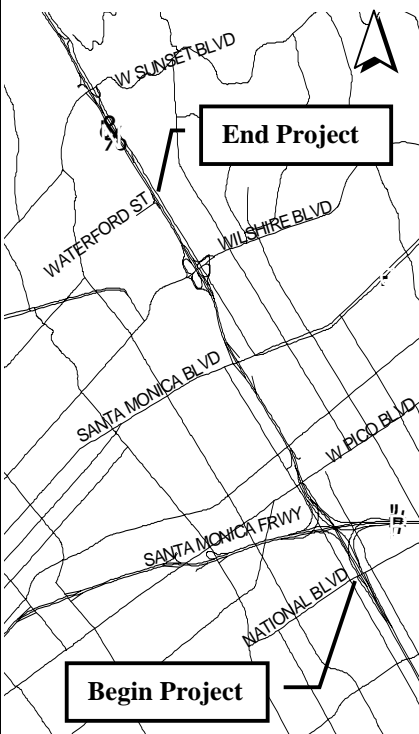
<small>STATE OF CALIFORNIA—BUSINESS, TRANSPORTATION AND HOUSING AGENCY</small>		<small>GRAY DAVIS, Governor</small>
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION <small>OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING DISTRICT 7, 120 SOUTH SPRING ST. LOS ANGELES, CA 90012-3606</small>		
 January 10, 2000		
Responsible Agencies, Review Agencies, Cooperating Agencies, Trustee Agencies, Interest Groups and Interested Individuals	File: 07-405-LA KP 47.0/51.6 EA 195900 Add HOV lane and auxiliary lanes from 0.5 km south of I-10 to Waterford St.	
 <u>Notice of Scoping/Initiation of Studies</u> 		
<p>This is to advise you that Caltrans is formally initiating studies for the proposed addition of auxiliary lanes between existing on-ramps and off-ramps on southbound Route 405. The project area extends from 0.5 km south of Interstate 10 to Waterford Street in the City of Los Angeles. Adding auxiliary lanes in this segment of southbound Route 405 is being considered in an effort to alleviate the traffic congestion that occurs on this segment of the freeway. In addition, a High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lane is proposed to provide continuity for the southbound HOV lane on the entire Route 405 corridor in Los Angeles County.</p> <p>Preliminary environmental resource studies indicate that the resulting environmental document will be an Initial Study/Environmental Assessment that is anticipated to lead to a Negative Declaration/Finding of No Significant Impact.</p> <p>We would appreciate being advised within 30 days if you have existing facilities or planned development in the study area. During the course of study, Caltrans will work closely with other agencies and their staffs in an effort to exchange ideas and assure that all pertinent factors are considered. We also welcome any comments or suggestions you may have concerning possible project alternatives or potential environmental impacts that should be analyzed.</p> <p>Please send your written comments by <u>February 10, 2000</u> to:</p> <p style="margin-left: 100px;">Ronald J. Kosinski, Chief Office of Environmental Planning Department of Transportation (Caltrans) 120 South Spring Street Los Angeles, CA 90012</p> <p>If you have any questions please contact Jinous Saleh at (213) 897-0683. Thank you for your interest in this important transportation study.</p> <p>Sincerely,  Ronald J. Kosinski, Chief Office of Environmental Planning Department of Transportation, District 7</p> <p>Attachment (1)</p>		

Figure 8-2 – Newspaper Scoping Advertisement

Published Sunday, January 16, 2000 in *Our Times* in the Santa Monica edition of the *Los Angeles Times*, the San Fernando Valley's *Daily News*, and the Spanish-language *La Opinión*.

	<p align="center">SCOPING NOTICE</p> <p align="center">Seeking Public Comment on Plans for Adding Auxiliary and HOV Lanes to Southbound 405 in the City of Los Angeles</p>
	
<p align="center">WHAT IS BEING PLANNED?</p> <p>The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is proposing the addition of auxiliary lanes between the existing on-ramps and off-ramps on southbound 405. The project area extends from 0.5 km south of Interstate 10 to Waterford Street. In addition, a High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lane is proposed to provide continuity for the southbound HOV lane on the entire Route 405 corridor in Los Angeles County. Generally, these improvements will be accommodated in the existing Right-of-Way, but minor additional Right-of-Way may be required.</p>	<p align="center">WHY THIS NOTICE?</p> <p>Caltrans is formally initiating studies for this improvement. Preliminary environmental studies indicate that the resulting environmental document will be an Initial Study which should lead to a Negative Declaration/Finding of No Significant Impact.</p> <p>A public hearing will be held to discuss the project studies when sufficient engineering, environmental and socioeconomic data have been developed. The public hearing will be publicized and you will be notified well in advance of the hearing time and location.</p>
<p align="center">CONTACT</p> <p>If you wish to be on a mailing list for actions concerning this project, or have any questions regarding this project, please contact Jinous Saleh, Office of Environmental Planning at (213) 897-0683.</p>	<p align="center">WHAT YOU CAN DO</p> <p>The purpose of this notice is to solicit public comments on this project, and insure an early involvement of public agencies, interested groups, and individuals in the environmental process.</p> <p>We will be pleased to answer any questions you may have with regard to this project. Please send your written comments by Feb. 16, 2000 to:</p> <p>Ronald J. Kosinski, Chief Office of Environmental Planning Department of Transportation 120 South Spring Street Los Angeles, CA 90012 RE: LA-405-KP 47.0/51.6</p>

8.4 Comments

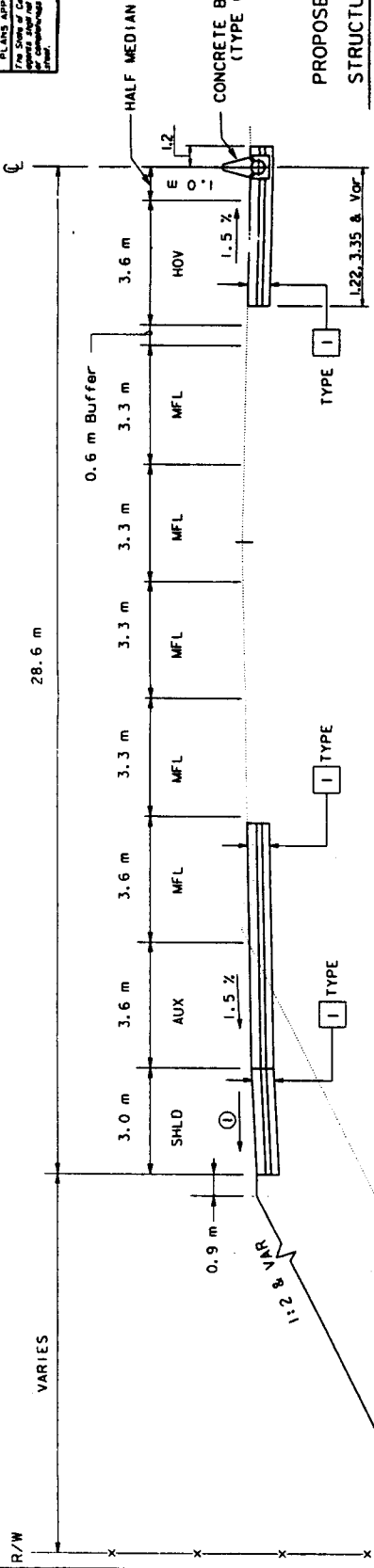
The following section summarizes the written and oral comments received during the initial scoping process. The corresponding sections where comments were addressed follow those that warranted a response. Copies of the letters are in Appendix F.

- Mr. Paul Casey, Senior Transit Program Analyst, Santa Monica Big Blue Bus – Requested to be added to the mailing list by phone call, requested consideration for Big Blue Bus lines that utilize Interstates 10 and 405. (February 4, 2000) *Sections 3.13 and 5.3, Question 44*
 - Hon. Wally Knox, Assemblymember 42nd District – Sent a letter asking Caltrans to fast track the proposed project by beginning construction planning, and working out the environmental clearances simultaneously. (February 10, 2000)
 - Mr. James L. de la Loza, Executive Officer, Regional Transportation Planning and Development, Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority – Sent a letter indicating that MTA has completed an initial study for a grade-separated light rail extension to the Blue line, and a busway facility within the limits of the proposed project. (February 14, 2000) *Section 2.3.2*
 - Mr. David Yamahara, Asst. Deputy Director, Planning Division, County of L.A., Dept. of Public Works – The Dept. of Public Works maintains flood control facilities in the vicinity of the proposed project. Any impacts to these facilities will require a permit from the Dept. of Public Works Construction Division. He believes that the project will not have any adverse significant traffic impact on County roads or intersections in the area. The adjoining cities should review this document for significant impacts/mitigations within their own jurisdictions. (February 29, 2000) *Section 5.1, Question 12*
 - Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk of Los Angeles – The Notice of Scoping/Initiation of Studies was posted on January 18, 2000. (March 10, 2000)
 - Susan C. Young, Executive Director, Veterans Park – They are in the final phase of completing the entire perimeter fencing around the Los Angeles National Cemetery as well as planting over 500 trees along the Wilshire corridor and I-405 clover leafs. They would like to propose the following to be considered and analyzed in Caltrans' study: improve and clean the infrastructure of the 405 freeway at Sepulveda and Wilshire; place all power poles underground from Sepulveda and Wilshire north to the end of the LA National Cemetery; add architectural surface treatments similar to some used in older history bridges that are LA landmarks; install "historic" street-lighting fixtures with ornamental luminaries; add more pedestrian-oriented lighting at pedestrian sidewalks leading to and through the underpasses; install bollards to improve pedestrian safety; remove standard guardrails and handrails and install historic ornamental of the same at off-ramps; install planting to supplement and complement landscaping being added as part of the overall Veterans Parkway plan at all locations; install night-lighting "up lights" to highlight the architectural character of the structures; install landmark signing to announce the "Veterans Parkway." (March 21, 2000) *Sections 2.3.3 and 5.3, Question 53*
 - Cindy Miscikowski, City of Los Angeles Councilwoman, Eleventh District
 - Michael Feuer, City of Los Angeles Councilman, Fifth District
 - Zev Yaroslavsky, Supervisor, Third District
- In individual letters each stated their support for the efforts of Veterans Park to beautify the community, please consider the improvements suggested by them. (March 16-21, 2000) *Section 5.3, Question 53*
- Hershel W. Gober, Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs Washington – He supports any improvements to the area that are consistent with the existing architectural styles and will turn the area into a scenic landscaped corridor. Without specific plans, he cannot comment on the recommendations, but feels that placing power poles underground, and providing additional landscaping is consistent with past and current projects. (March 21, 2000) *Section 5.3, Question 53*

APPENDIX A

Preliminary Plan Layouts and Typical Cross Sections

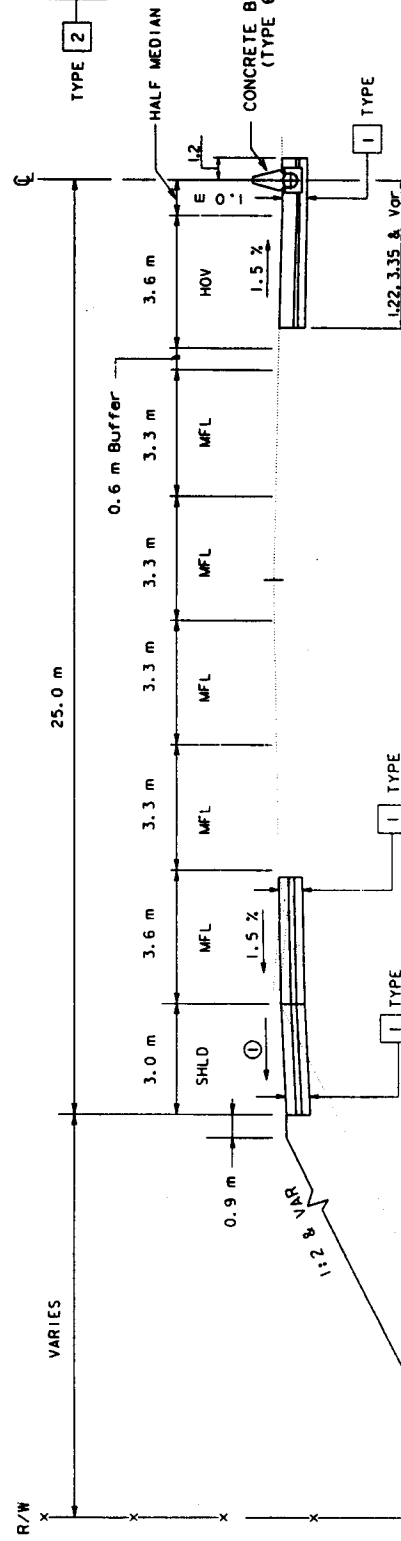
RTE 405 - SOUTHBOUND



PROPOSED TYPICAL
STRUCTURAL SECTIONS

TYPE ☐ 1 ☐ 260 mm PCC ☐ 150 mm LCB ☐ 215 mm CL3 AB

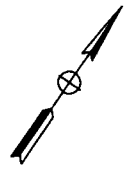
RTE 405 - SOUTHBOUND



TYPE	2	150 mm LCB	215 mm CL3 AB
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APPENDIX A PROPOSED TYPICAL CROSS SECTIONS

- NOTES**
- CROSS SLOPE AT SUPERELEVATION NOT SHOWN
 - CROSS SECTIONS AT STRUCTURES NOT SHOWN
 - PROPOSED SOUNDWALL NOT SHOWN, SEE PRELIMINARY LAYOUT FOR WALL HEIGHT, LIMITS, AND SHOULDER WIDTH.
 - PROPOSED RETAINING WALL NOT SHOWN, SEE PRELIMINARY LAYOUT FOR LOCATION OF RETAINING WALL
 - TYPE [2] SECTION WILL APPLY WHERE EVER A OVERLAY EXISTS
- ① CROSS SLOPE FOR SHOULDER SHOULD BE DETERMINED AT DESIGN



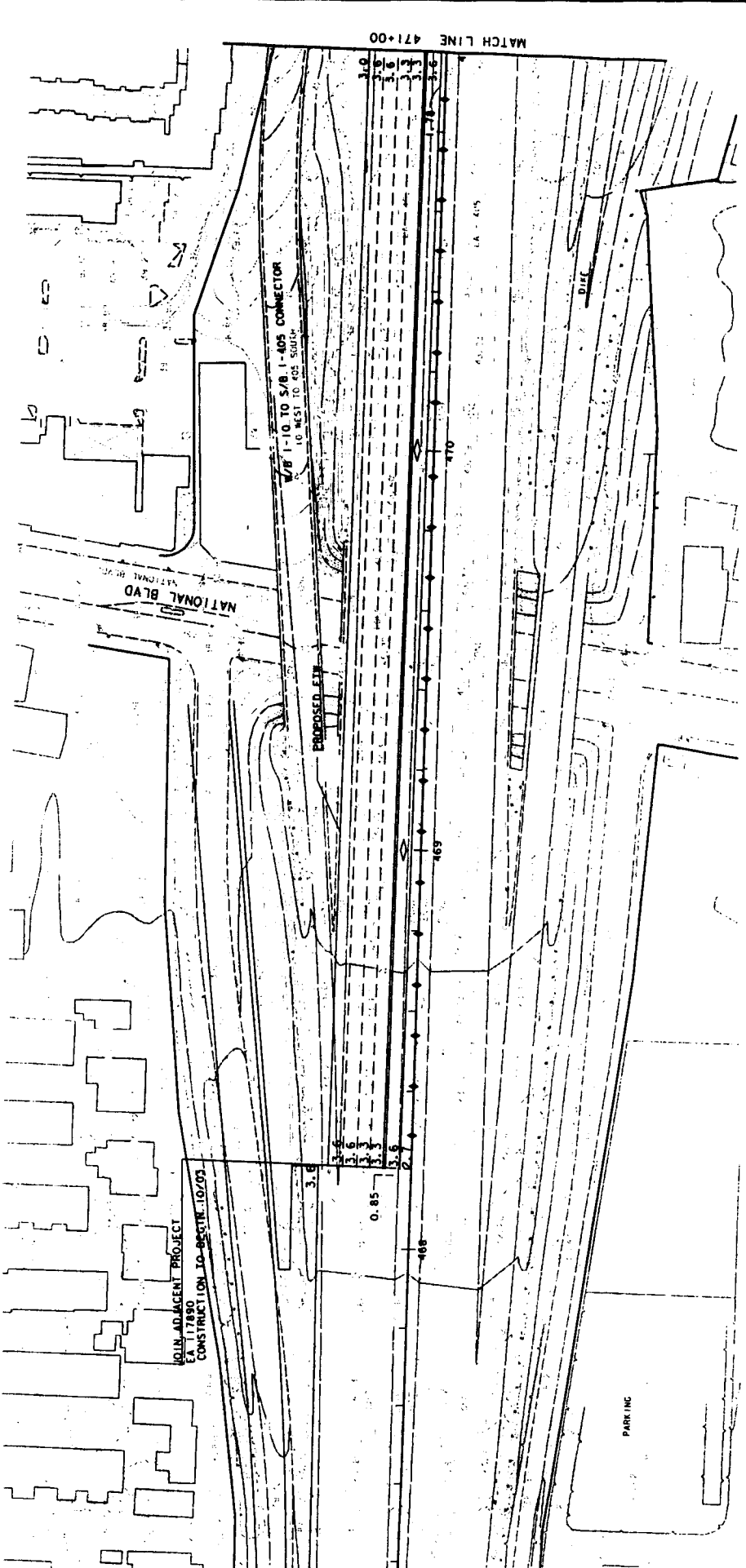
DIST	COUNTY	ROUTE	PROJECT NO.	SHEET TOTAL
07	LA	405	47.0/51.6	51

REGISTERED CIVIL ENGINEER

PLANS APPROVAL DATE

DATE

BY



ALTERNATIVE 2
 PRELIMINARY PLAN
 SHEET 1 OF 14
 SCALE: 1"=1000'

STATE OF CALIFORNIA - DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION		DESIGN		FERDINAND ORDONA		CHECKED BY		DATE	
PROJECT ENGINEER		DESIGNED BY		DATE		REVISED BY		DATE	



DIST	COUNTY	ROUTE	TOTAL PROJECT	SHEET TOTAL
07	LA	405	47.0/51.6	NO. SHEETS

REGISTERED CIVIL ENGINEER

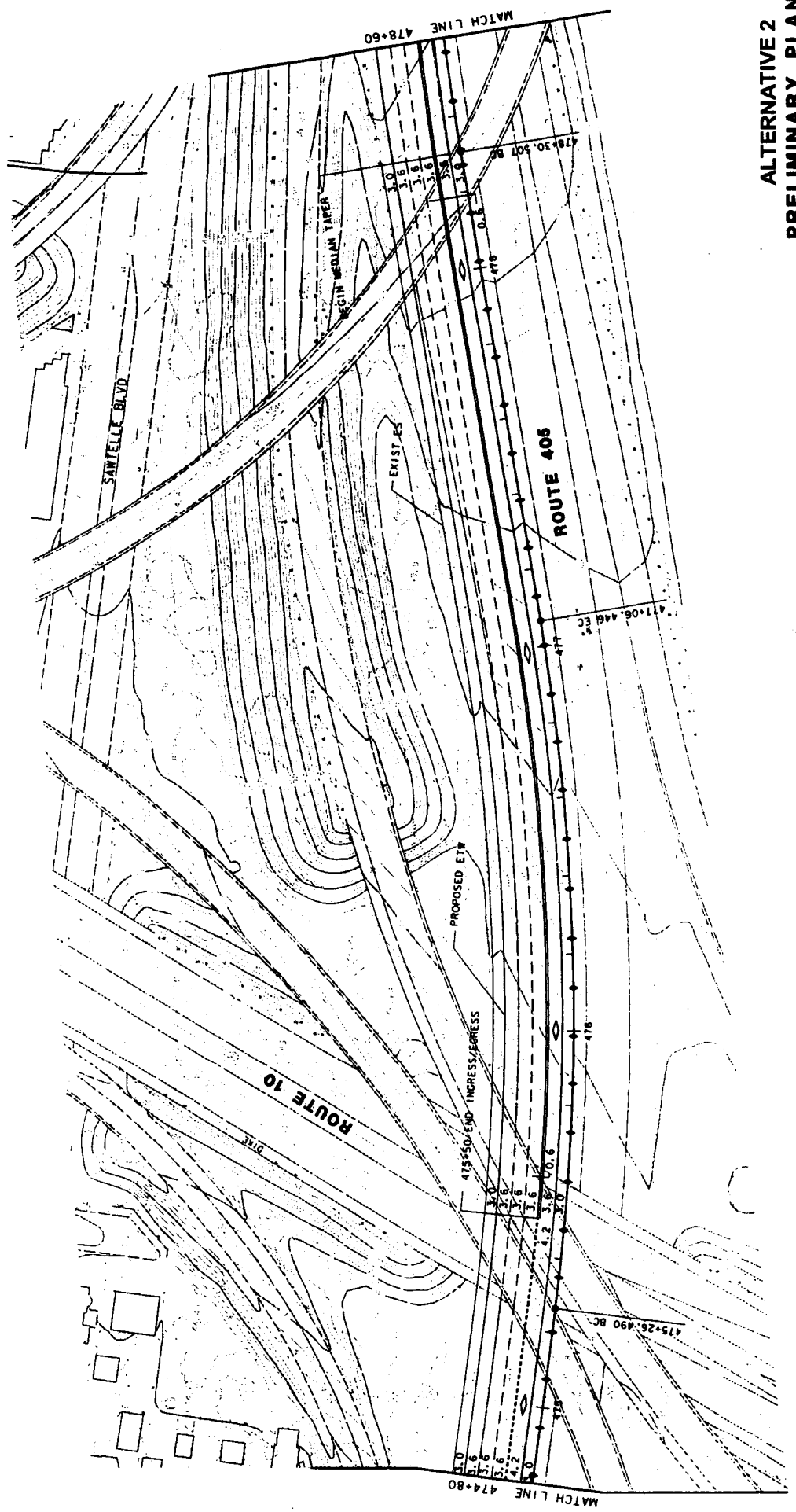
PLANS APPROVAL DATE

THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA OFFICE OF THE REGISTERED CIVIL ENGINEER

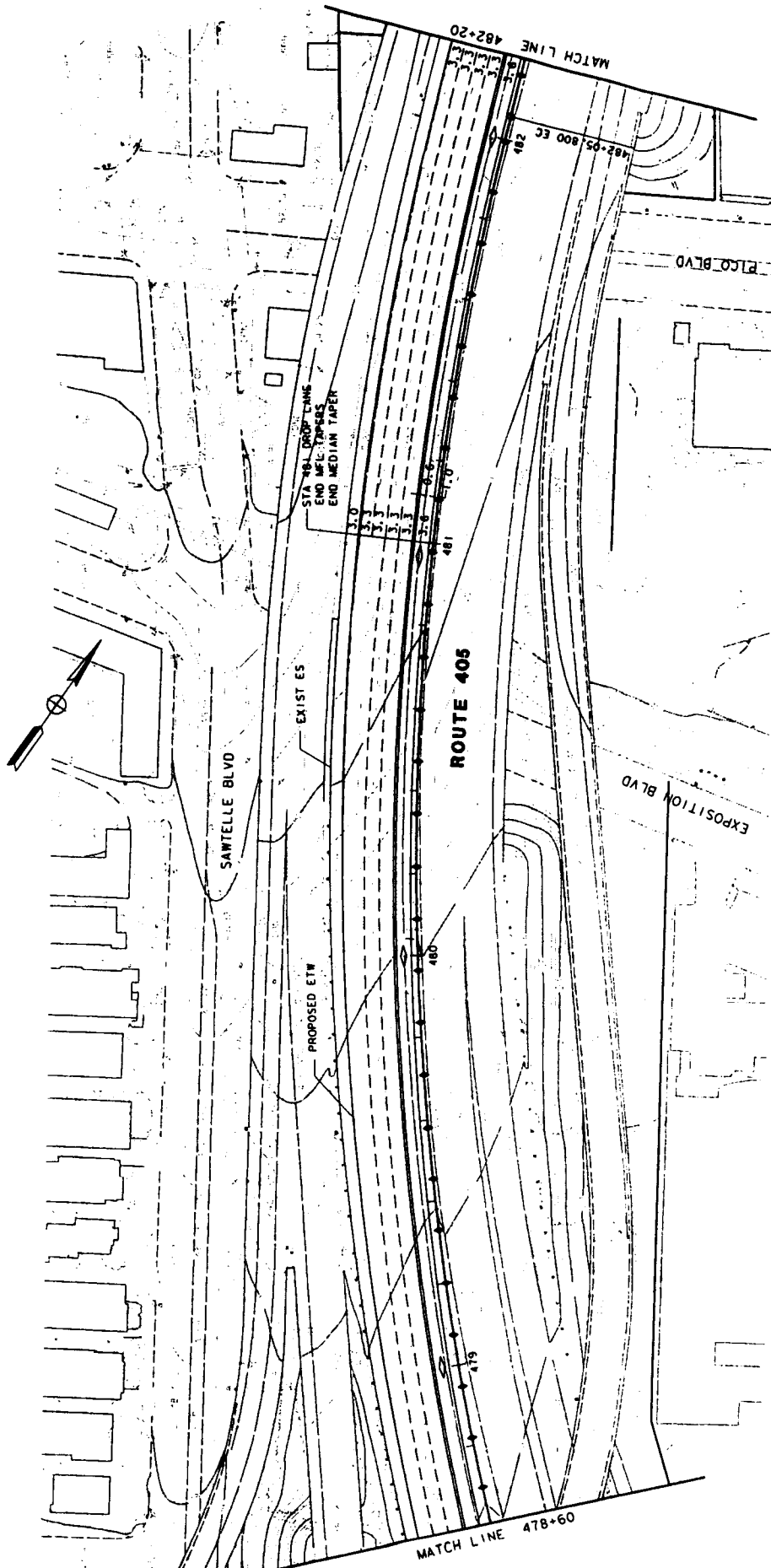
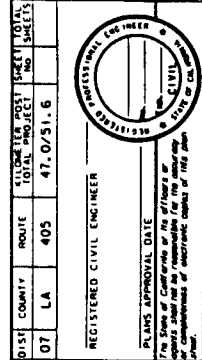
OFFICE OF THE REGISTERED CIVIL ENGINEER

OFFICE OF THE REGISTERED CIVIL ENGINEER

OFFICE OF THE REGISTERED CIVIL ENGINEER



ALTERNATIVE 2
 PRELIMINARY PLAN
 SHEET 3 OF 14
 SCALE: 1"=1000'

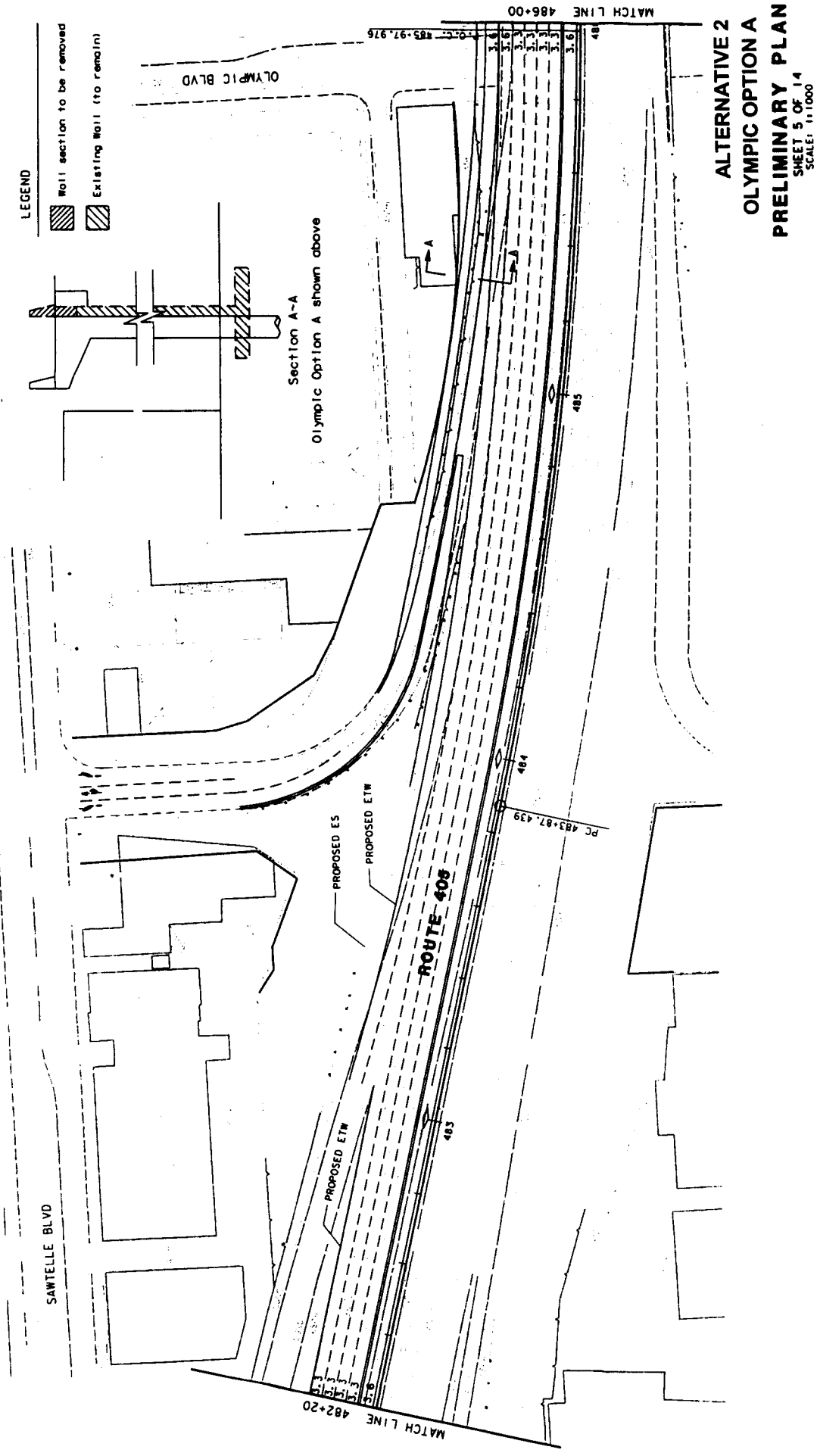


ALTERNATIVE 2
PRELIMINARY PLAN
SHEET 4 OF 14
SCALE: 1"=1000'

[illegible]



DIST		COUNTY		ROUTE		SHEET NO.		TOTAL SHEETS	
07		LA		405		47.0/51.6			
REGISTERED CIVIL ENGINEER PLANS APPROVAL DATE The State of California or its officers or agents shall not be responsible for the accuracy or completeness of the data or information furnished herein.									



ALTERNATIVE 2
OLYMPIC OPTION A
PRELIMINARY PLAN
SHEET 5 OF 14
SCALE: 1"=100'



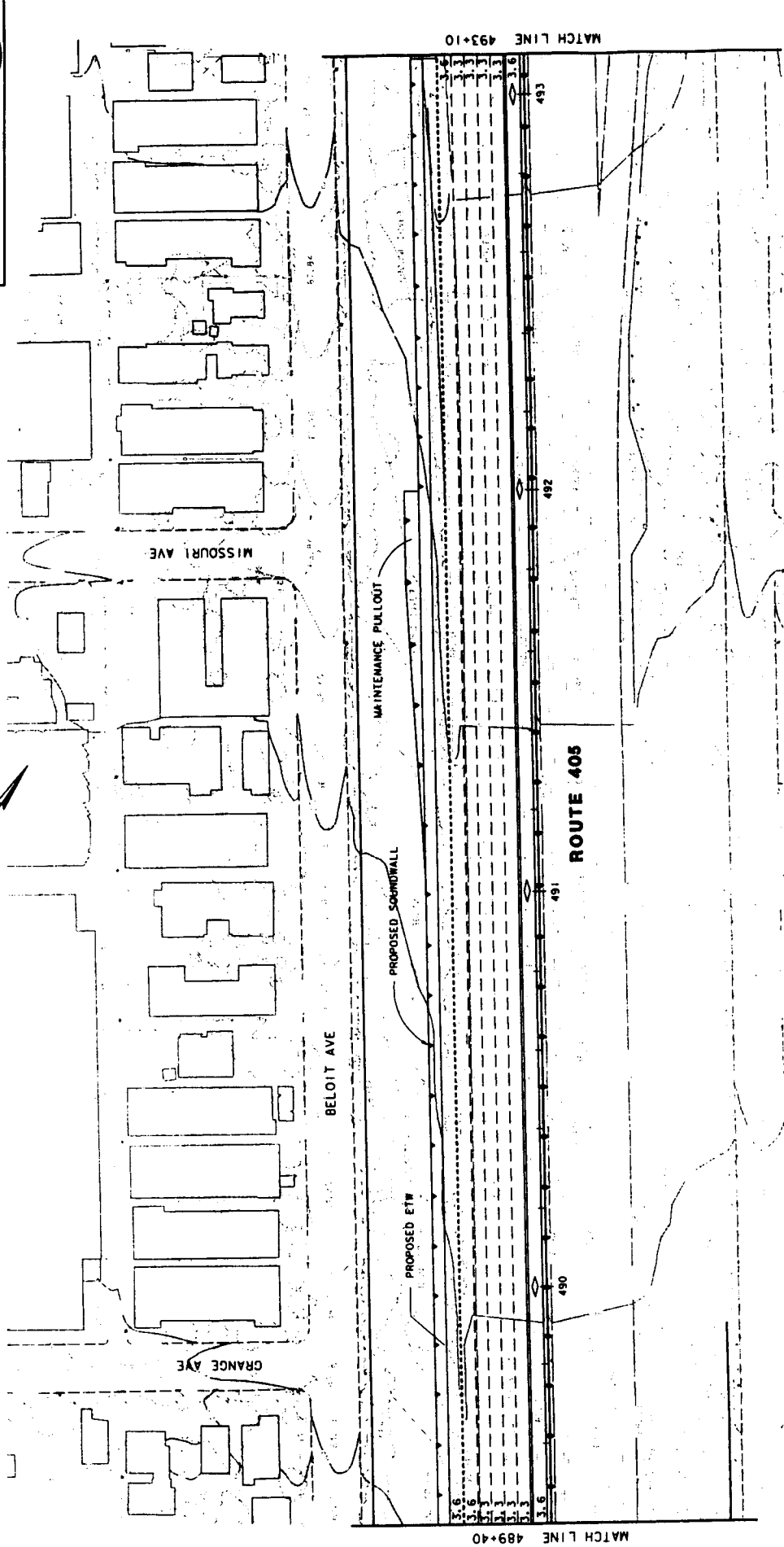


DIST	COUNTY	ROUTE	KILOMETER POST MILE TOTAL	SHEET NO.
07	LA	405	47.0/51.6	

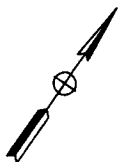
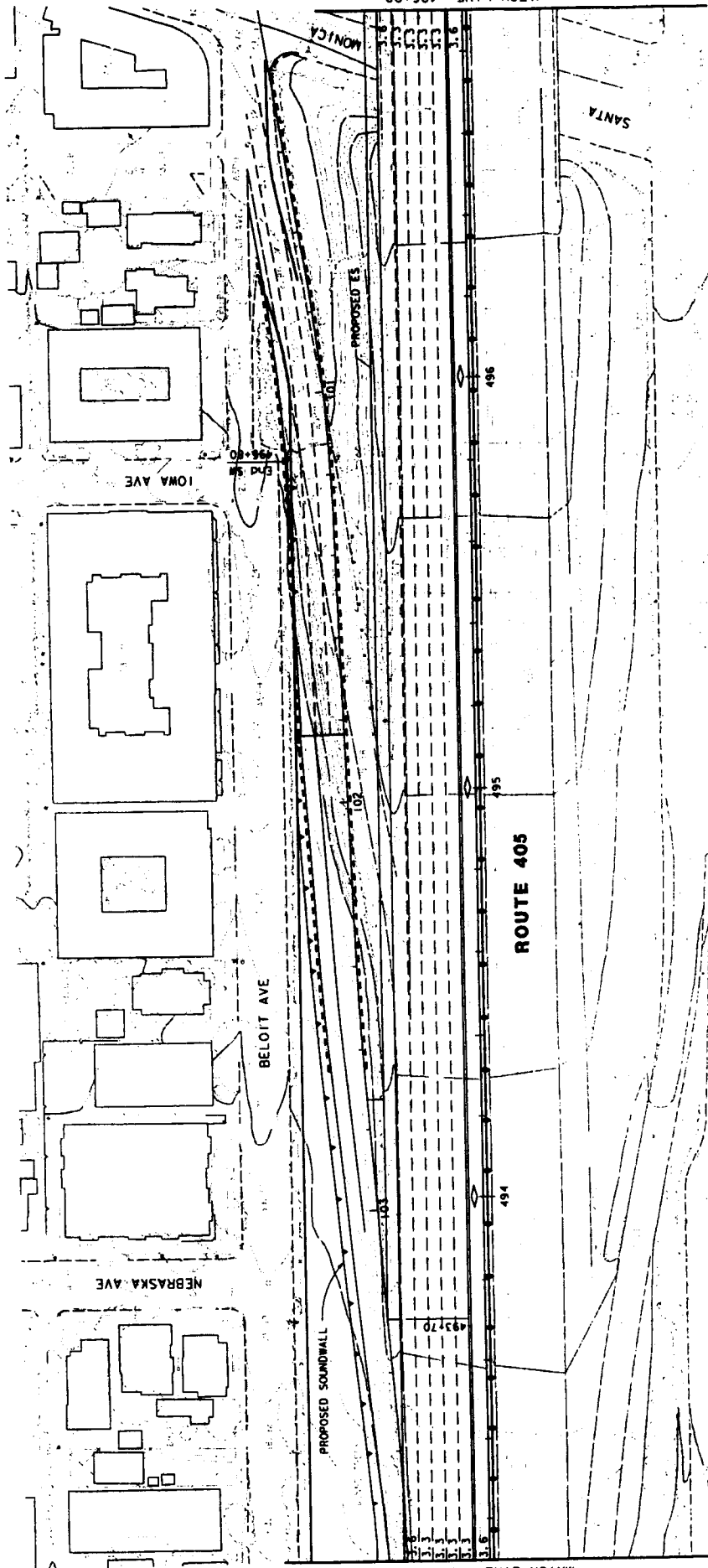
REGISTERED CIVIL ENGINEER

PLANS APPROVAL DATE

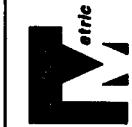
The State of California or its officers or agents shall not be responsible for the adequacy or completeness of information supplied by this plan.



ALTERNATIVE 2
PRELIMINARY PLAN
 SHEET 7 OF 14
 SCALE: 1"=100'

[illegible]

STATE OF CALIFORNIA - DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION		PROJECT ENGINEER		DESIGN		FERNANDO ORDONA		CHECKED BY		DATE	
		DESIGNED BY		REVISOR		DATE		REVISOR		DATE	

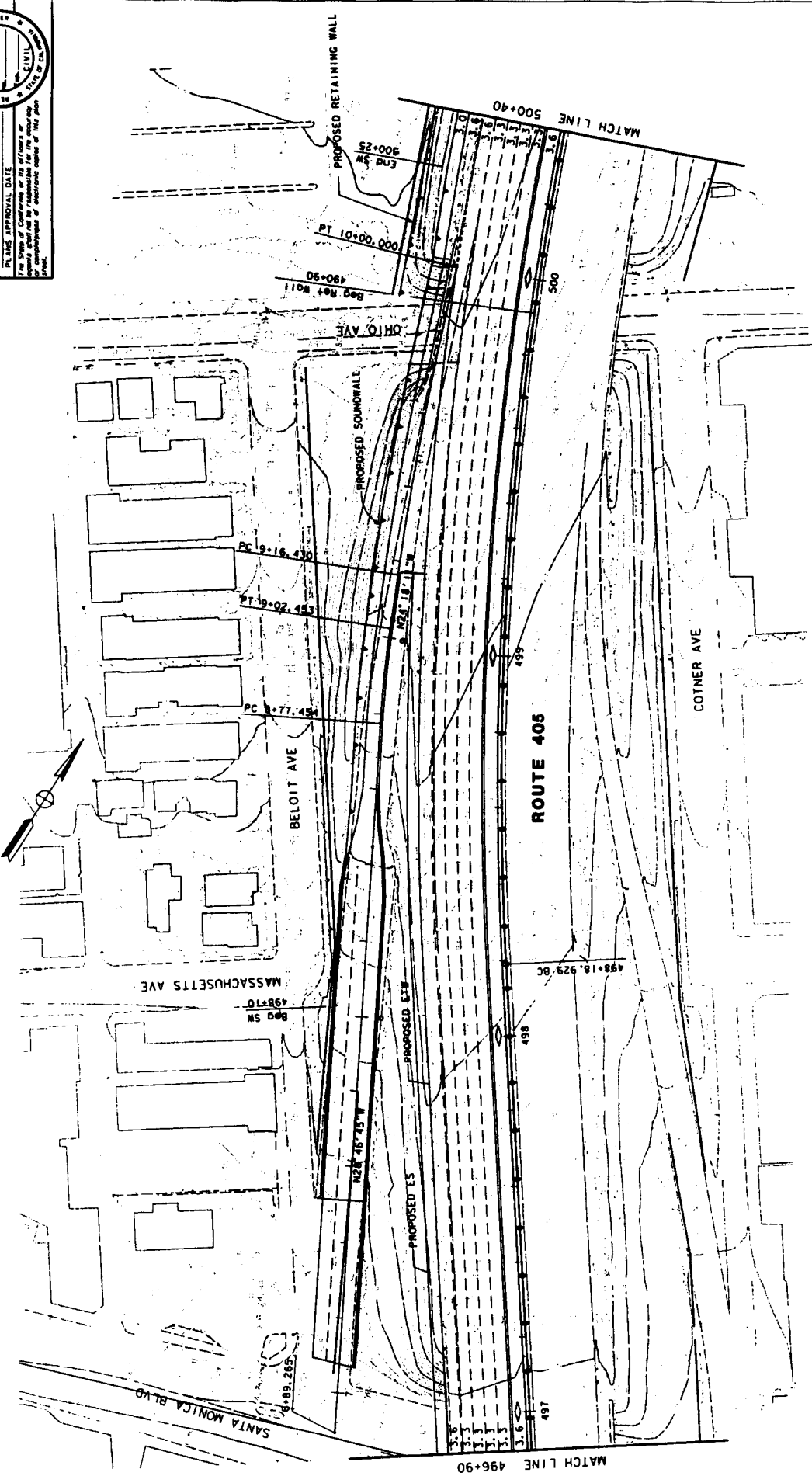


DIST	COUNTY	ROUTE	SHEET NO.	TOTAL SHEETS	DATE
07	LA	405	47	0/51.6	47.0/51.6

REGISTERED CIVIL ENGINEER

PLANS APPROVAL DATE

I, the State of California, do hereby certify that the above named engineer is a duly licensed and qualified engineer, and that the work shown on these plans was done by him or under his direct supervision and control, and that he is a resident of the State of California.



ALTERNATIVE 2
PRELIMINARY PLAN
SHEET 9 OF 14
SCALE: 1"=100'

STATE OF CALIFORNIA - DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION		PROJECT ENGINEER		DESIGN	
FERNANDO ORDONA		CHECKED BY		DATE	
DESIGNED BY		DATE		REVISOR	
DATE		REVISOR		DATE	
DATE		REVISOR		DATE	

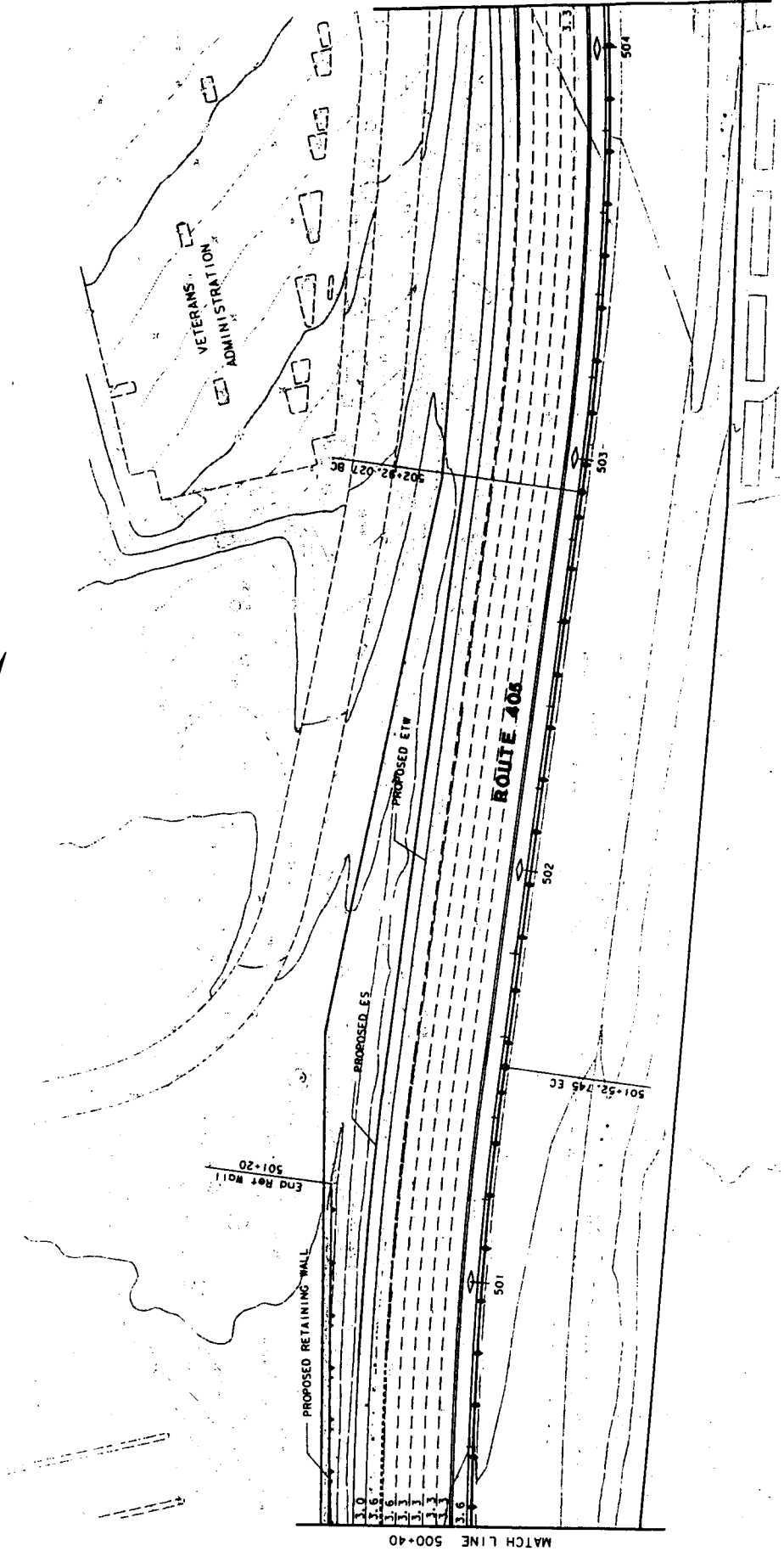


DIST	COUNTY	ROUTE	TOTAL SHEETS	TOTAL PROJECT SHEETS
07	LA	405	47	0/51.6

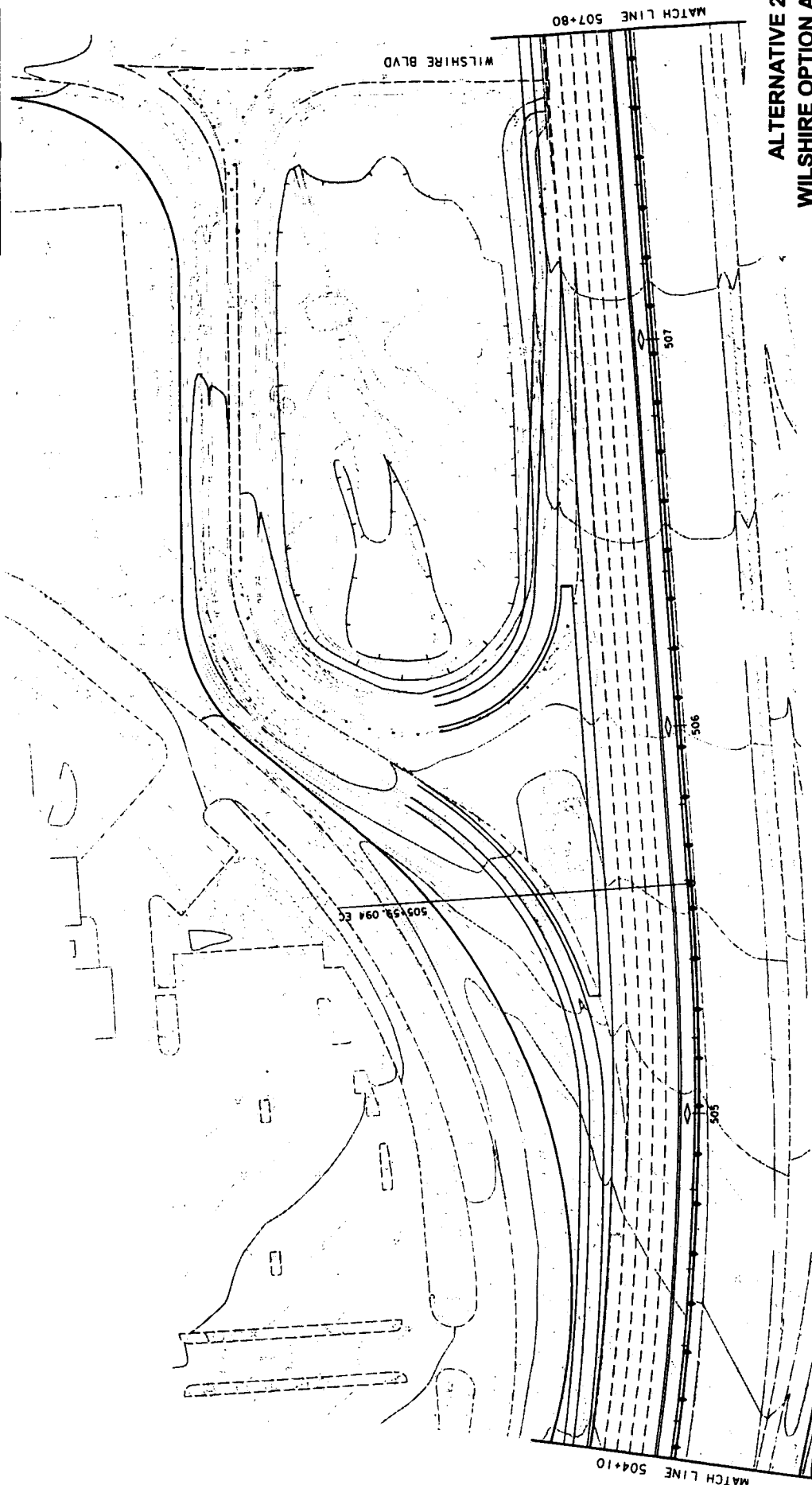
REGISTERED CIVIL ENGINEER

PLANS APPROVAL DATE

The State of California or its officers or agents shall not be responsible for the accuracy or completeness of the information shown on this plan.



ALTERNATIVE 2
PRELIMINARY PLAN
SHEET 10 OF 14
SCALE: 1"=1000'



**ALTERNATIVE 2
WILSHIRE OPTION A
PRELIMINARY PLAN**

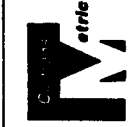
DIST	COUNTRY	HOME	CLIENTS PER PROJECT	SHEET NO.	TOTAL SHEETS
07	LA	405	47,031,6		

REGISTERED CIVIL ENGINEER

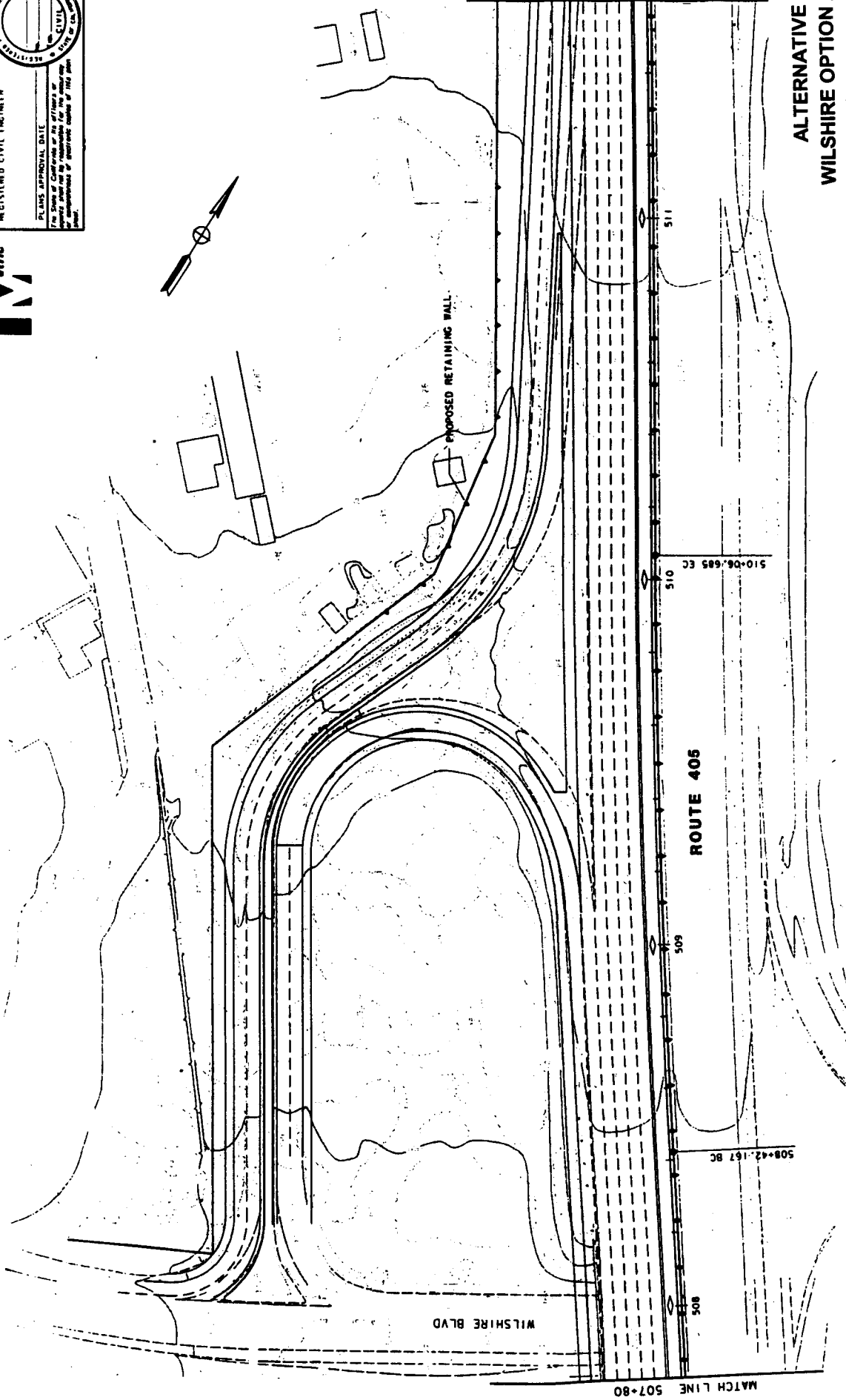
PLANS APPROVAL DATE

For State of California, the Engineer has examined the plans and specifications submitted and recommends approval of these plans and specifications.

Professional Engineer Seal for the State of California, License No. 10000, Civil Engineering.



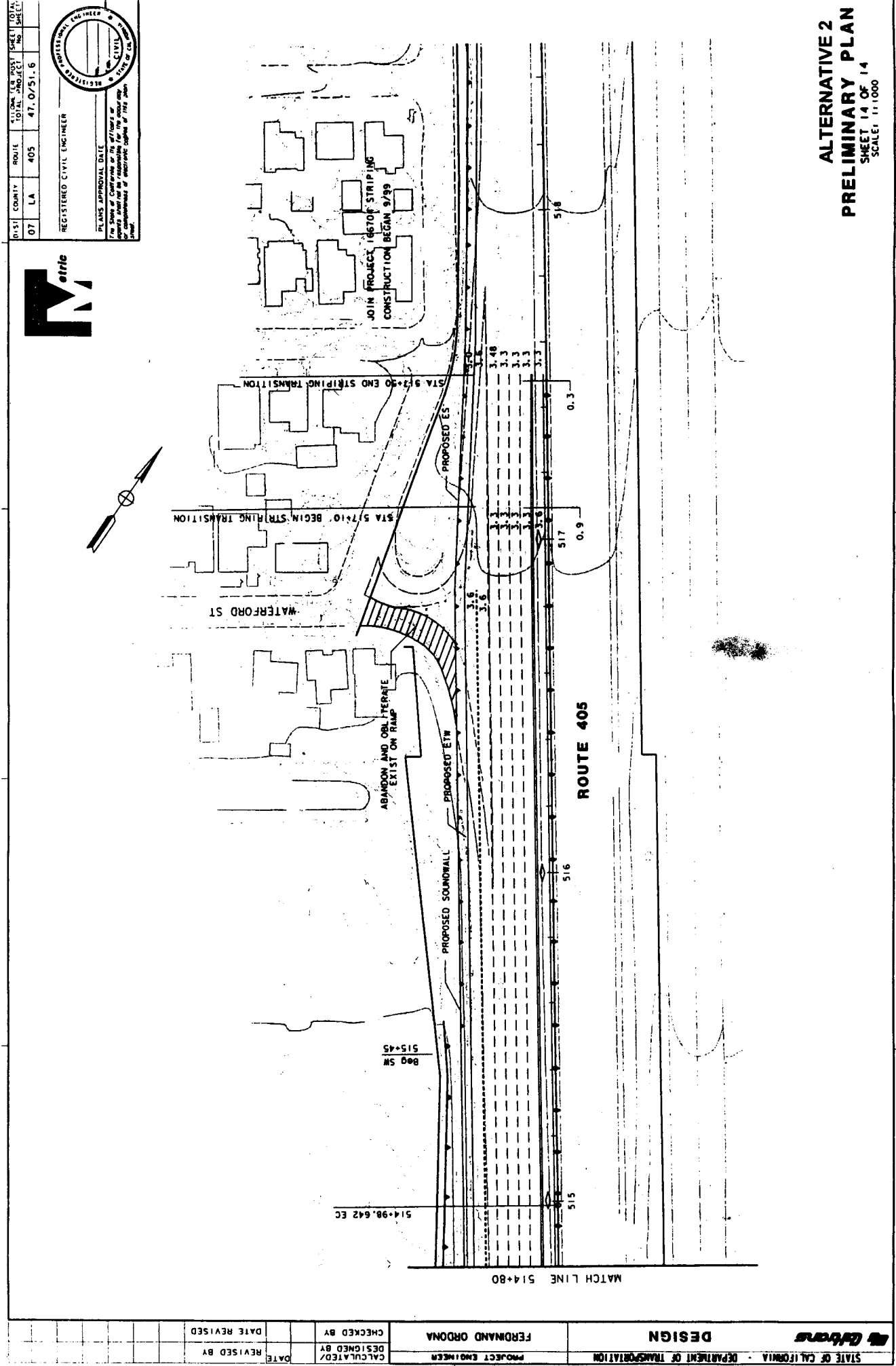
PROJECT INFORMATION		SHEET INFORMATION	
PROJECT NO.	07 LA 405	SHEET NO.	47 OF 51
DATE	07/01/01	DATE	07/01/01
REGISTERED CIVIL ENGINEER		REGISTERED CIVIL ENGINEER	
PLANS APPROVAL DATE		PLANS APPROVAL DATE	
APPROVED BY		APPROVED BY	

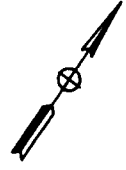


ALTERNATIVE 2
WILSHIRE OPTION A
PRELIMINARY PLAN
SHEET 12 OF 14
SCALE: 1"=100'

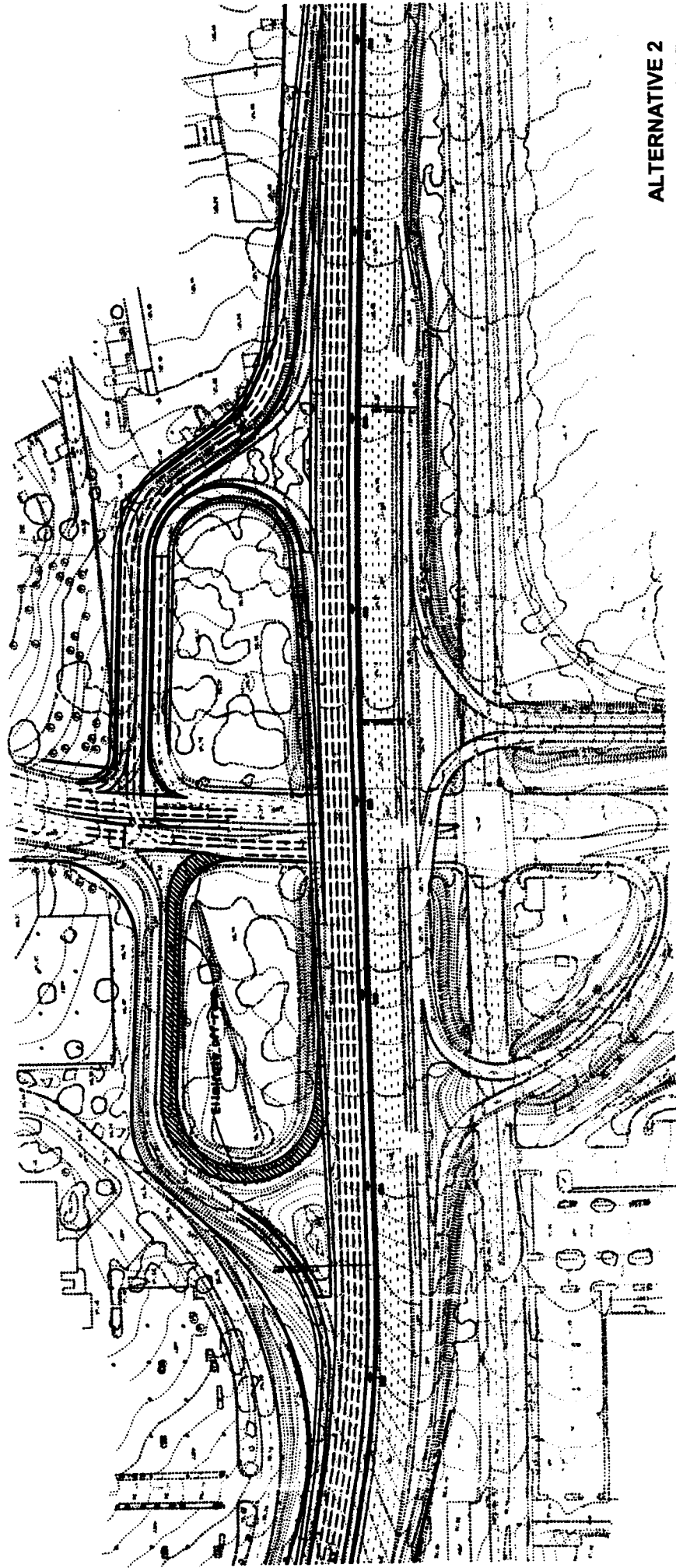
CHECKED BY	
CALCULATED/DESIGNED BY	

ALTERNATIVE 2
PRELIMINARY PLAN
SHEET 14 OF 14
SCALE: 1"=1000'





SCALE: NONE



ALTERNATIVE 2
WILSHIRE OPTION B
PRELIMINARY PLAN

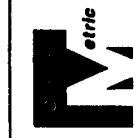
CU 07106

DATE FILED: 07/10/06

SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

EA 195506

STATE OF CALIFORNIA - DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION		PROJECT ENGINEER		DESIGN		FERDINAND ORDONA		CHECKED BY		DATE		DATE REVISD	

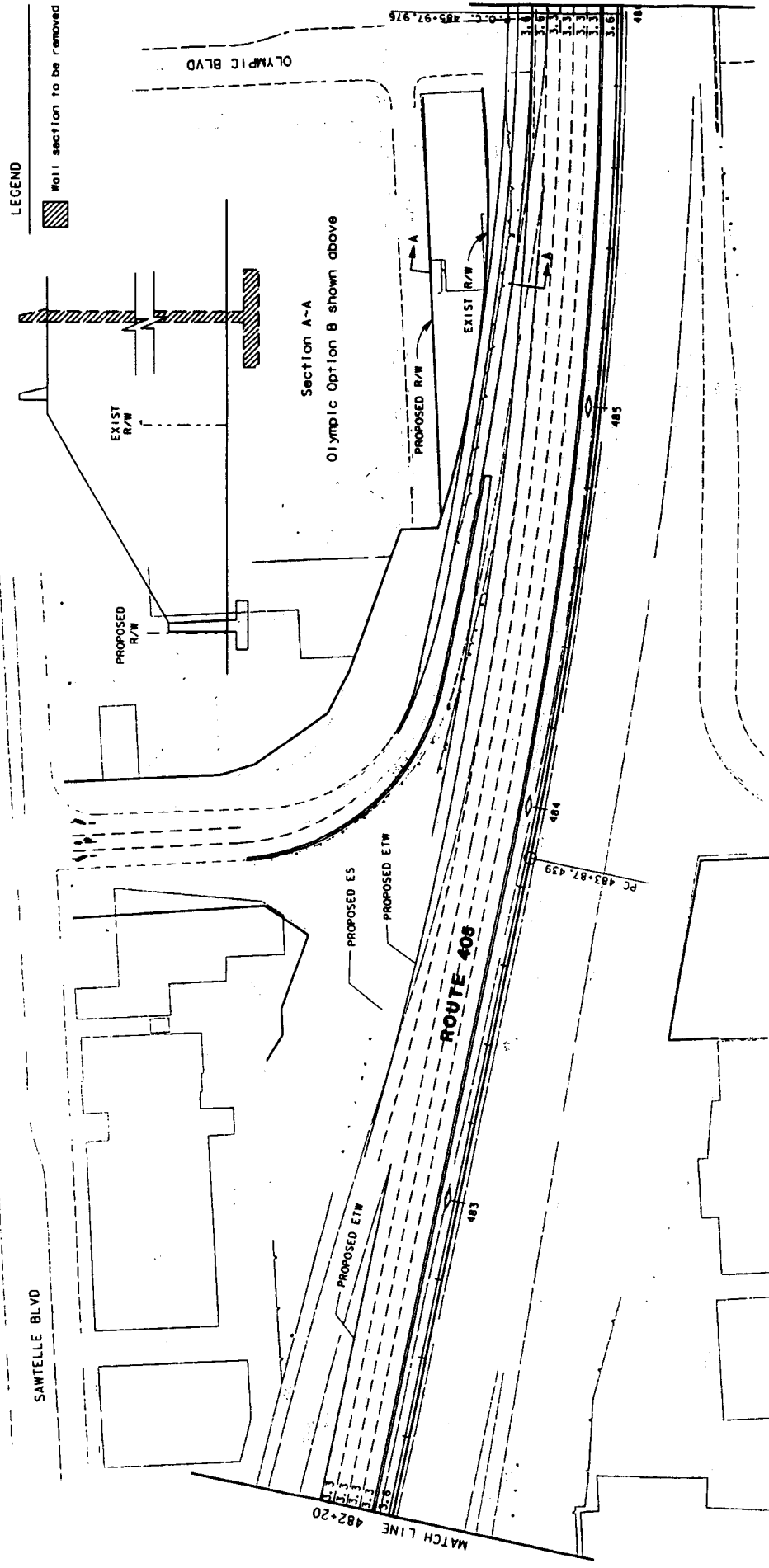


DIST	COUNTY	ROUTE	TOTAL PROJECT	SHEET NO.
07	LA	405	47.0/51.6	51

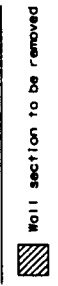
REGISTERED CIVIL ENGINEER

PLANS APPROVAL DATE

THE State of California or its officers or agents shall not be held responsible for consequences or damages of any kind resulting from the use of these plans.



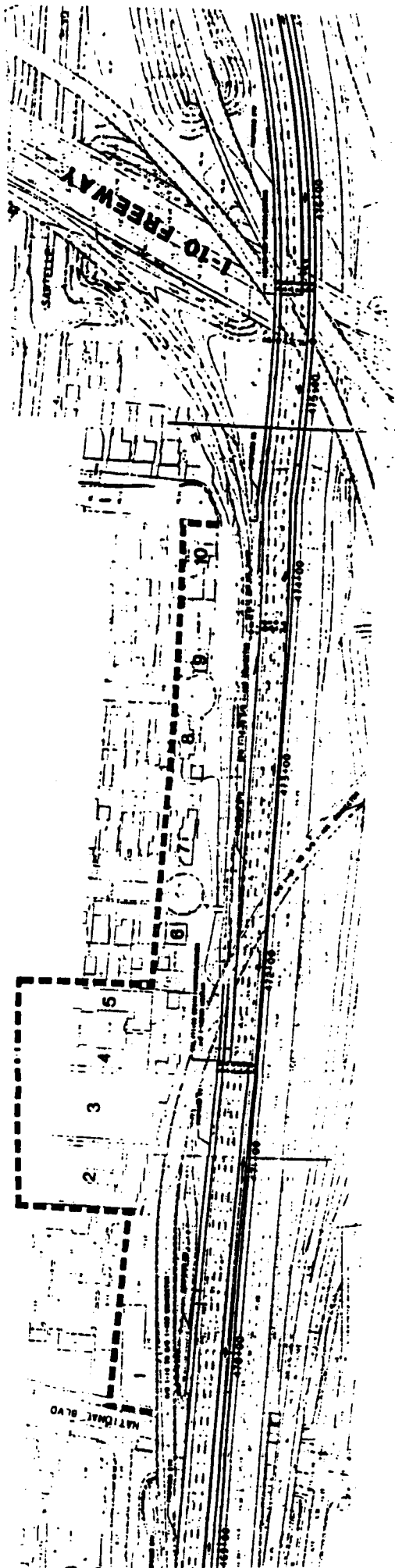
LEGEND



**ALTERNATIVE 2
OLYMPIC OPTION B
PRELIMINARY PLAN**

APPENDIX B

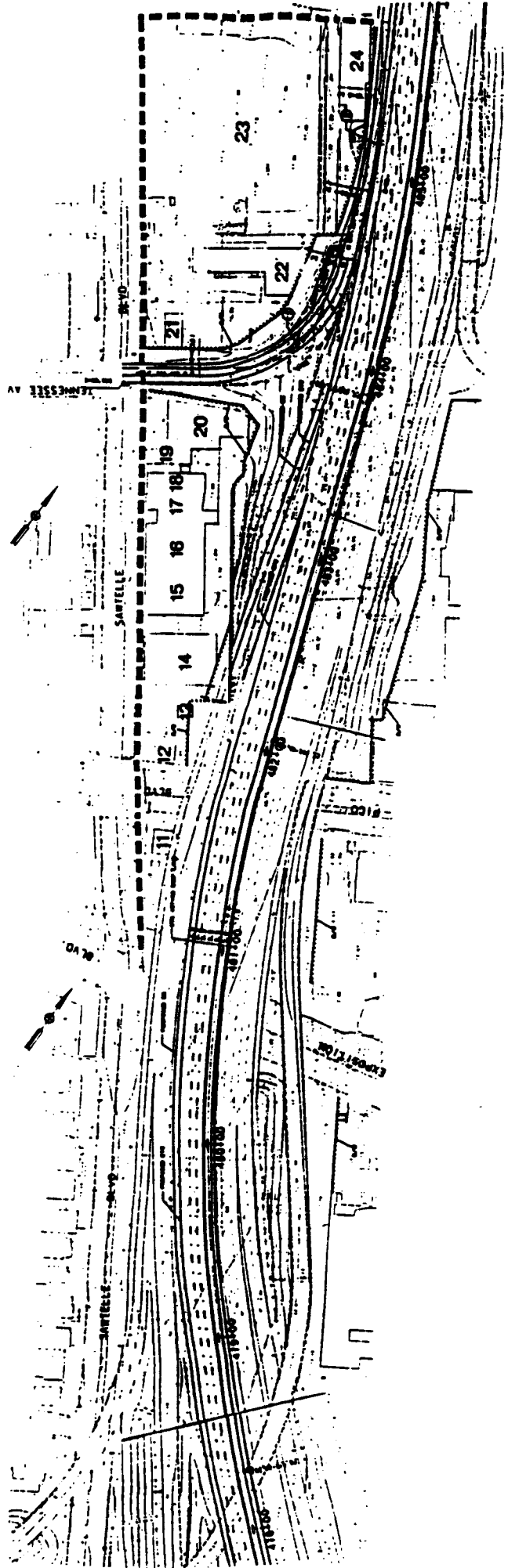
Area of Potential Effect Map

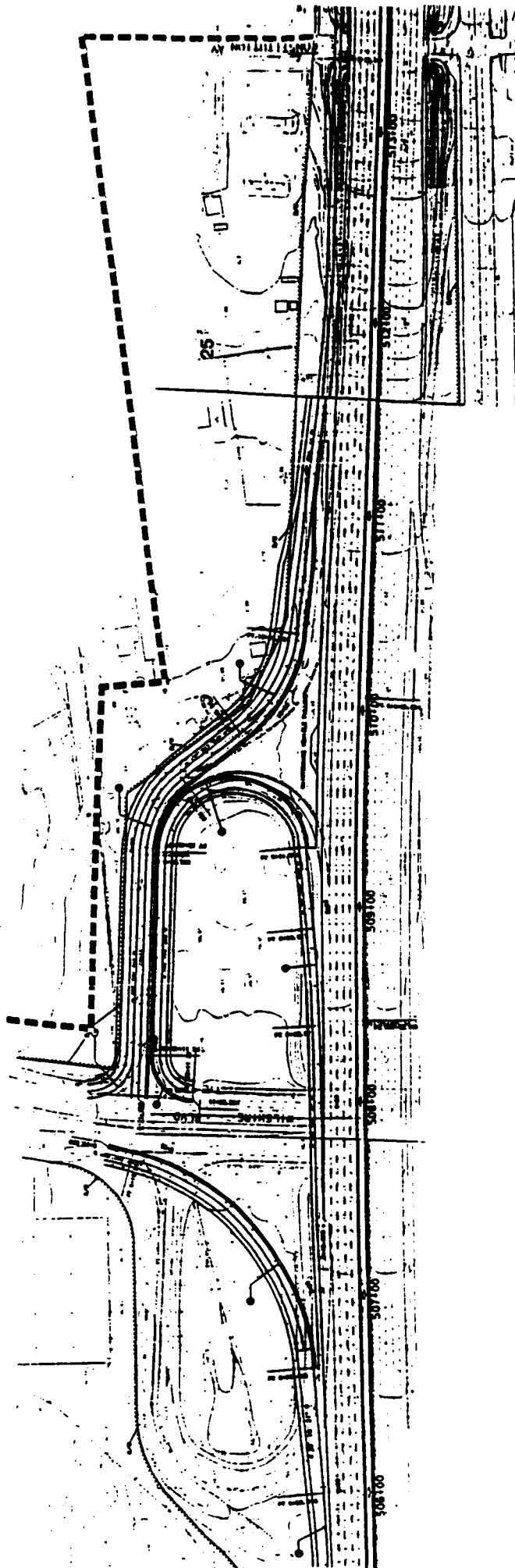


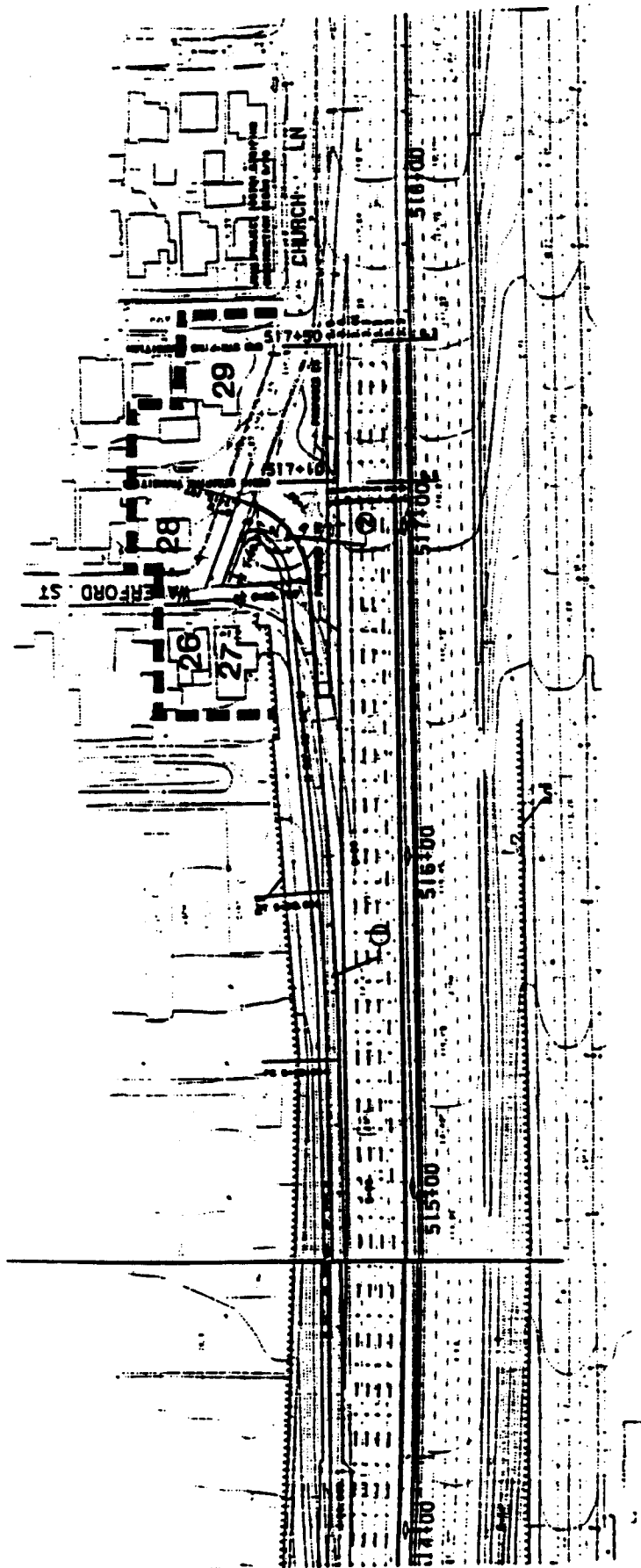
Route 405 HOV Lane
 From I-10 to Waterford Street
 KP 47.0/51.6, PM 29.2/32.1
 EA 195900

Area of Potential Effects is within the State's right of way except where delineated.

FHWA Engineer Approval
 Signature *[Signature]* Date *5/17/00*







APPENDIX C

State Historic Preservation Office Concurrence

**OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION**

P.O. BOX 942896
SACRAMENTO, CA 94296-0001
(916) 653-8624 Fax: (916) 653-9824
calshpo@ohp.parks.ca.gov
Reply To: FHWA000623B



July 19, 2000

Michael G. Ritchie, Division Administrator
U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration
California Division
980 Ninth Street, Suite 400
Sacramento, CA 95814-2724

Re: Determinations of Eligibility and Effect for Proposed Traffic Improvements along I-405 between I-10 and Waterford Street, Los Angeles County, CA

Dear Mr. Ritchie:

You have provided me with the results of your efforts to determine whether the project described above may affect historic properties. You have done this, and are consulting with me, in order to comply with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and implementing regulations codified at 36 CFR Part 800.

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has determined that there are no archeological sites within the APE. Ninety-two properties were identified within the APE. Sixty-one properties qualify for treatment under the "Memorandum of Understanding Regarding Evaluation of Post-1945 Buildings, Moved Pre-1945 Buildings, and Altered Pre-1945 Buildings", and the "Interim Guidelines-Post-45 MOU". Twenty bridges within the APE were previously determined ineligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) as part of the 1986 Caltrans Bridge Survey. The FHWA has also determined that the following properties are not eligible for the NRHP and that no historic properties will be affected by this undertaking:

- 11261 National Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA
- 2834 Sawtelle Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA
- 2816 Sawtelle Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA
- 2342 Sawtelle Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA
- 2330 Sawtelle Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA
- 2320 Sawtelle Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA
- 2314 Sawtelle Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA
- 2308 Sawtelle Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA
- 11336 Waterford Street, Los Angeles, CA
- 11339 Waterford Street, Los Angeles, CA
- 11332 Chenault Street, Los Angeles, CA

Based on review of the submitted documentation, I have the following comments:

- 1) The project's area of potential effect is defined appropriately.
- 2) The FHWA undertook adequate correspondence with local organizations and tribal groups.
- 3) The cultural resource studies conducted to date are adequate.
- 4) None of the properties located within the APE are eligible for the NRHP.
- 5) No historic properties will be affected by the proposed undertaking.

Thank you for considering historic properties during project planning. If you have any questions, please call Natalie Lindquist at (916) 654-0631 or e-mail at nlind@ohp.parks.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Original Signed By

Daniel Abeyta, Acting
State Historic Preservation Officer

APPENDIX D

Title VI Policy Statement

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
1120 N STREET
P. O. BOX 942873
SACRAMENTO, CA 94273-0001
PHONE (916) 654-5267
FAX (916) 654-6608



July 26, 2000

**TITLE VI
POLICY STATEMENT**

The California State Department of Transportation under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related statutes, ensures that no person in the State of California shall, on the grounds of race, color, sex and national origin be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity it administers.

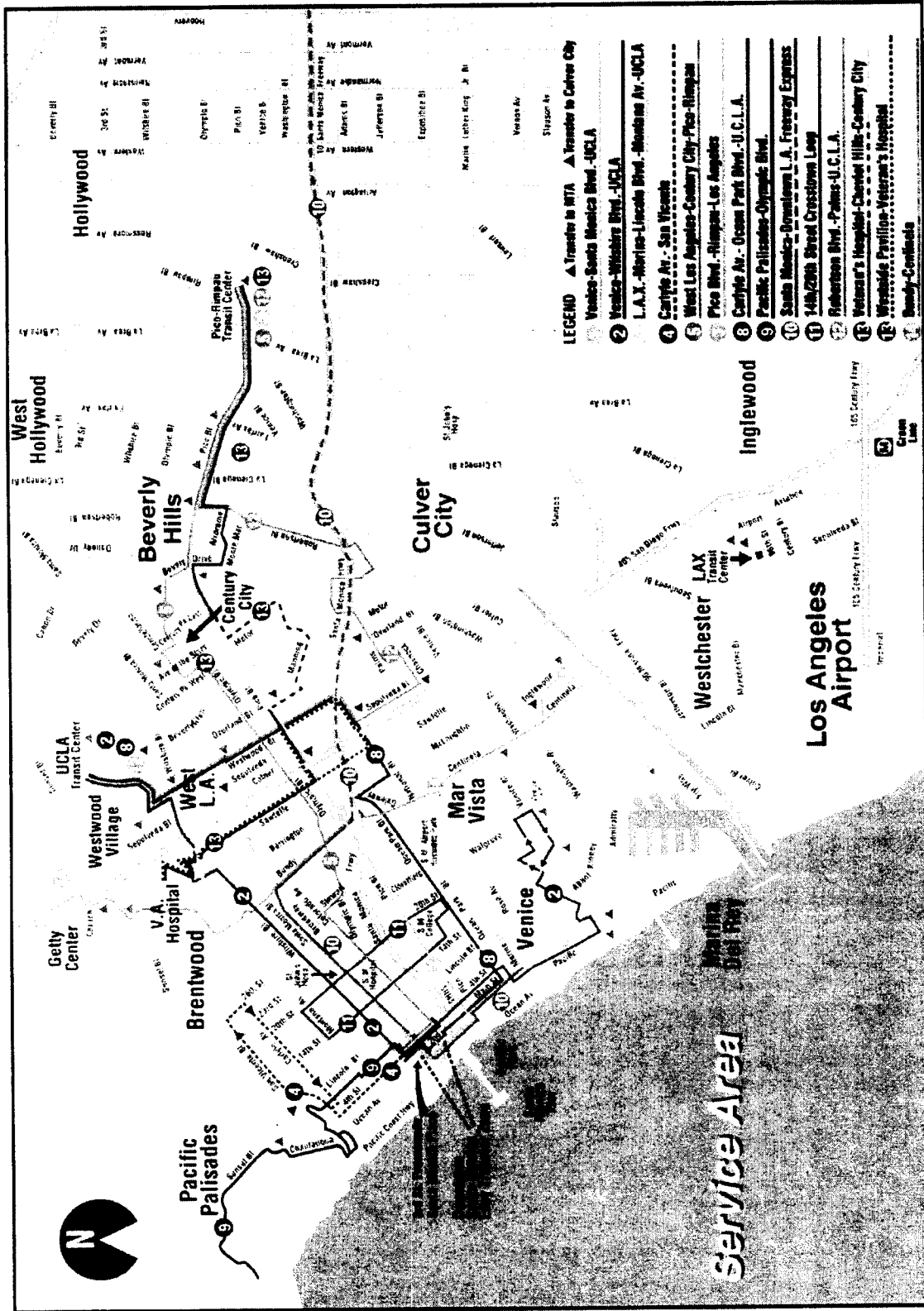
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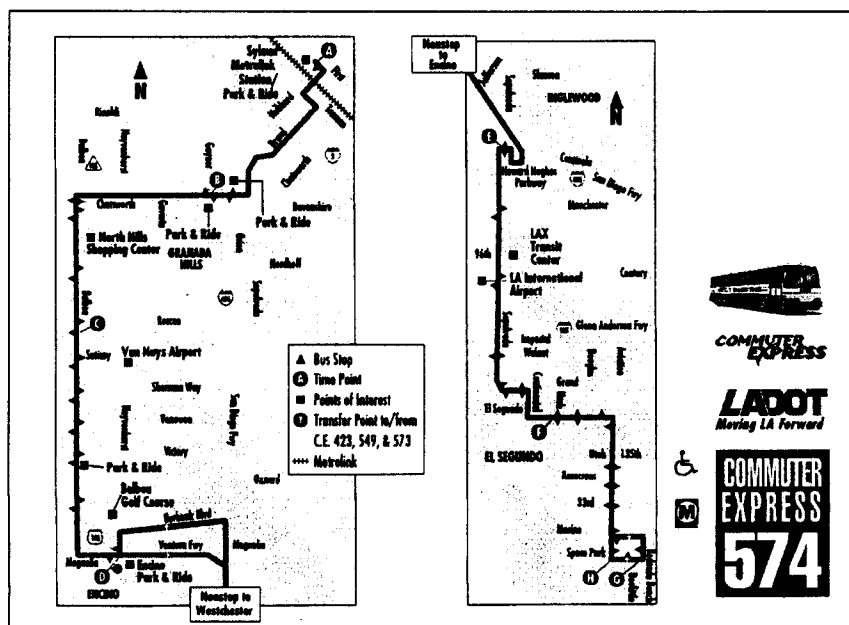
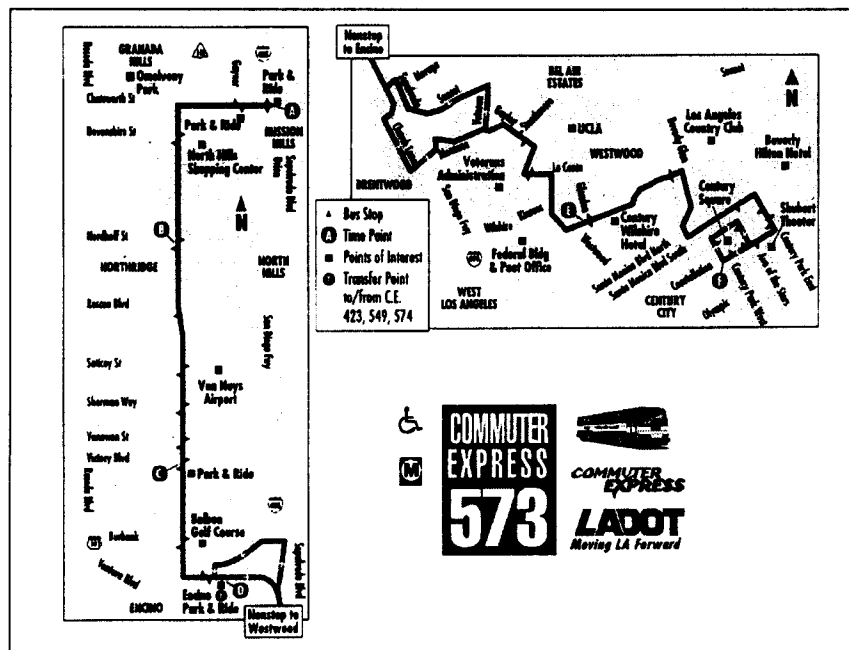
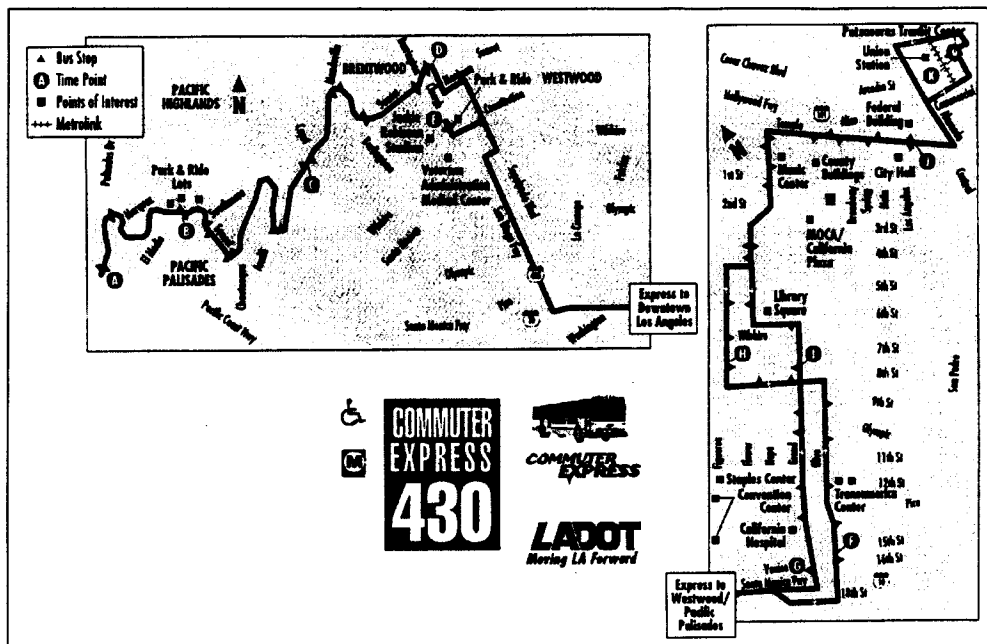
JEFF MORALES
Director

APPENDIX E

Public Transportation Routes

Santa Monica's Big Blue Bus Routes





APPENDIX F

Scoping Response Letters

STATE CAPITOL
P.O. BOX 942849
SACRAMENTO, CA 94249-0042
TELEPHONE (916) 319-2042

DISTRICT OFFICE
5757 WILSHIRE BLVD., SUITE 645
LOS ANGELES, CA 90036
TELEPHONE (323) 932-1201

E-Mail:
wally.knox@assembly.ca.gov
Website:
www.assembly.ca.gov/knox

Assembly California Legislature



WALLY KNOX
ASSEMBLYMEMBER, FORTY-SECOND DISTRICT

CHAIR
REVENUE AND TAXATION
COMMITTEE

CHAIR
SELECT COMMITTEE ON
TRANSPORTATION CONGESTION RELIEF

COMMITTEES
HOUSING AND COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT
JUDICIARY
PUBLIC EMPLOYEES, RETIREMENT
AND SOCIAL SECURITY

February 10, 2000

Ronald J. Kosinski, Chief
Office of Environmental Planning
Department of Transportation
120 South Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: File 07-405-LA KP 47.0/51.6

Dear Mr. Kosinski:

I am pleased that Caltrans is proposing approximately \$75 million in new highway construction to alleviate the intolerable traffic congestion on Route 405 in my district. I welcome your notice announcing an additional mixed-use lane on southbound 405 from Waterford Street to National Boulevard south of I-10. This additional lane will reduce the traffic congestion on the southbound 405 freeway. Auxiliary lanes such as this, created on the right-hand side of the freeway, are low cost ways to improve traffic flow and ease congestion in the short term. I was pleased to obtain funding for a similar auxiliary lane on the northbound 405 from Mulholland to Sepulveda.

I ask you to fast track this auxiliary lane project by beginning construction planning at the same time as you are working out the environmental clearances.

Caltrans was able to shave a year and one half off the construction schedule for the northbound 405 auxiliary lane by expedited planning. I ask you to seek similar efficiencies on this project as described above.

Thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,

WALLY KNOX
Assemblymember 42nd District

WK:kr



Metropolitan
Transportation
Authority

One Gateway Plaza
Los Angeles, CA
90012-2952

February 8, 2000

Mr. Ronald J. Kosinski, Chief
Office of Environmental Planning
Department of Transportation, District 7
120 South Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

RE: Notice of Scoping/Initiation of Studies for I-405 HOV Project-Add HOV lane and auxiliary Lanes from south of I-10 to Waterford Street (EA 07-195900)

In your letter of January 10, 2000, you asked for MTA's comments regarding the above subject project and whether the MTA has any existing facilities or planned development in the study area.

The MTA Transportation Development and Implementation Planning unit has recently completed an initial study for a grade separated light rail extension to the Blue line and an exclusive Busway facility within the proposed project limits. The proposed project is located in the vicinity of the I-405 San Diego Freeway alignment between Santa Monica Boulevard crossing Route 405 to just south of Pico Boulevard. A copy of the study alignment is enclosed for your review.

A board report regarding this study was recently presented to the MTA board. It is anticipated that the MTA board at its second board meeting, will make a decision on whether or not to proceed with the environmental study for the proposed project at a future date.

We will update you in the future of the MTA board decision so that Caltrans could possibly consider this project in its study efforts.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our input in this important transportation study.

Should you have any questions regarding this submittal, please contact Mr. Edward Abiola at (213) 922-7675.

Sincerely,

JAMES L. de la LOZA
Executive Officer,
Regional Transportation Planning and Development

Enclosure

cc: Bob Cashin, MTA
Raymond Maekawa, MTA



HARRY W. STONE, Director

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

900 SOUTH FREMONT AVENUE
ALHAMBRA, CALIFORNIA 91803-1331
Telephone: (626) 458-5100

ADDRESS ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO:
P.O. BOX 1460
ALHAMBRA, CALIFORNIA 91802-1460

February 29, 2000

IN REPLY PLEASE
REFER TO FILE: P-2

Mr. Ronald J. Kosinski, Chief
Office of Environmental Planning
Department of Transportation
120 South Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Mr. Kosinski:

**RESPONSE TO A NOTICE OF SCOPING/INITIATION OF STUDIES (NOS/IS) -
ADDITION OF SOUTHBOUND HIGH OCCUPANCY VEHICLE AND AUXILIARY LANES
FROM WATERFORD STREET TO 0.5 KM SOUTH OF INTERSTATE ROUTE 10**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the NOS/IS for the proposed Addition of Southbound High Occupancy Vehicle and Auxiliary Lanes from Waterford Street to 0.5 KM South of Interstate Route 10. We have reviewed the NOS/IS and offer the following comments:

Programs Development

As requested, we have reviewed the conceptual information provided by the State of California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) for construction of the subject improvements and have the following comments. This Department does maintain flood control facilities in the vicinity of the proposed project. Any impacts to these facilities will require a permit from this Departments Construction Division.

Traffic and Lighting

As requested, we have reviewed the Notice of Scoping/Initiation of Studies for the proposed project. The State of California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) will be the Lead Agency. The project is located along the southbound Interstate 405 (I-405) Freeway between 0.5 kilometer south of Interstate 10 Freeway and Waterford Street in the City of Los Angeles.

Mr. Ronald J. Kosinski
February 29, 2000
Page 2

The proposed project consists of adding auxiliary lanes along this segment of the I-405 Freeway as an effort to alleviate the traffic congestion that occurs on this segment of the Freeway. In addition, a High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lane is proposed to provide continuity for the southbound HOV lane on the entire I-405 Freeway corridor in Los Angeles County.

We do not believe the project will have any adverse significant traffic impact on County roads or intersections in the area. The adjoining cities should review this document for significant impacts/mitigations within their jurisdictions.

If you have any questions regarding the environmental reviewing process of this Department, please contact Mr. Scott Schales at the address on the first page or at (626) 458-4119.

Very truly yours,

HARRY W. STONE
Director of Public Works



For: DAVID YAMAHARA
Assistant Deputy Director
Planning Division

DBM:ro
A:\YC319.wpd

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
SUSAN C. YOUNG

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
WILLIAM M. BELDING, *PRESIDENT*
US NAVY SEAL TEAM ONE
PAUL T. BANNAI, US ARMY
ROBERT BARNETT, US NAVY
ROBERT MCKIM BELL, US ARMY
HARVE BENNETT, US NAVY
FRED COWAN, *TREASURER*, US ARMY



PAUL L. EDWARD, USMC
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MRS. DONALD PETRONI
GWYNN H. ROBINSON, MAJ. GEN. USAF, RET.
TOM SALTARELLI, US NAVY
ALEXA SCHARFF, *SECRETARY*
MRS. CHARLES WICK

March 21, 2000

Mr. Ronald J. Kosinski, Chief
Office of Environmental Planning
Department of Transportation, District 7
120 South Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Mr. Kosinski:

Thank you for sending us the Notice of Scoping/Initiation of Study letter regarding the Caltrans work on the 405 freeway. We are always interested in ways to improve and enhance the Veterans Parkway. As you may know, we are in the final phase of completing the entire perimeter fencing around the Los Angeles National Cemetery as well as planting over 500 trees along the Wilshire corridor and 405 clover leafs.

Veteran's Park would like to propose the following to be considered and analyzed in your study:

- To improve and clean the infrastructure of the 405 freeway at Sepulveda and Wilshire.
- To place all power poles undergrounds from Sepulveda and Wilshire north to the end of the Los Angeles National Cemetery.
- To improve the exterior appearance by adding architectural surface treatments similar to some used in older history bridges that are Los Angeles landmarks.
- Where appropriate, to install "historic" street-lighting fixtures with ornamental luminaries.
- To add more pedestrian-oriented lighting at pedestrian sidewalks leading to and through the underpasses.
- To install bollards to improve pedestrian safety.
- To remove standard guardrails and handrails and install historic ornamental of the same at off ramps.
- To install planting to supplement and complement landscaping being added as part of the overall Veterans Parkway plan at all locations.
- To install night-lighting ("up lights") to highlight the architectural character of the structures.
- To install landmark signing to announce the "Veterans Parkway".

Page 2
Mr. Kosinski Letter
March 21, 2000

For your review, I have enclosed the Veterans Parkway Conceptual Plan that calls out specifically for some of these particular enhancements along the Wilshire corridor and 405 interchange at Wilshire and Sepulveda.

Once your meeting has convened, I welcome the opportunity to discuss these suggestions with you further. Thank you, again, for informing us of the Caltrans project, and I look forward to speaking with you in late March.

Sincerely,



Susan C. Young
Executive Director

Cc: Congressman Henry Waxman
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Major Richard Riordan
Councilman Mike Feuer
Councilwoman Cindy Miscikowski
Department of Veterans Affairs
National Cemetery Administration
General Services Administration



CINDY MISCIKOWSKI

City of Los Angeles
Councilwoman, Eleventh District

Committees

Chair, Public Safety

Vice-Chair, Planning and Land
Use Management

Member, Budget and Finance

Ronald J. Kosinski, Chief
Office of Environmental Planning
Department of Transportation (CalTrans)
120 South Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

March 21, 2000

Dear Mr. Kosinski:

Thank you for the opportunity to offer written comments regarding your proposed addition of auxiliary lanes between existing on-ramps and off-ramps on the southbound 405 Freeway. I understand that you are working to alleviate the traffic congestion in this area from Interstate 10 to Waterford Street.

As you move forward with this project, I would appreciate your consideration of the additional improvements suggested to you by Veterans Park. I support their tireless effort to beautify this portion of our West Los Angeles community and any assistance you can provide by incorporating their suggestions for beautification into your project would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Cindy Miscikowski

cc: Sue Young, Veterans Park

Valley Office

17547 Ventura Boulevard, Room 202
Encino, CA 91316
(818) 756-8150
(818) 756-9175 Fax

City Hall

200 N. Main Street, Room 407
Los Angeles, CA 90012
(213) 485-3811
(213) 473-6926 Fax

West Los Angeles Office

1645 Corinth Avenue, Room 201
Los Angeles, CA 90025
(310) 575-8461
(310) 575-8305 Fax





Michael Feuer
City of Los Angeles
Councilman, Fifth District

West L.A. Office
822 S. Robertson Blvd., #102
Los Angeles, CA 90035
(213) 847-4467
Fax: (310) 289-0365

City Hall Office
200 N. Main St.
Room 309
Los Angeles, CA 90012
(213) 485-5013
Fax: (213) 687-7406

Valley Office
14310 Ventura Blvd., #100
Sherman Oaks, CA 91423
(818) 756-8083
Fax: (818) 788-9210

March 16, 2000

Mr. Ronald Kosinski, Chief
Office of Environmental Planning
Department of Transportation, District 7
120 South Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Mr. Kosinski:

I am writing in support of the final phase of Veteran's Park and this organization's application requesting funds to further improve the area along the 405 freeway between Interstate 10 and the Waterford Street exit.

The Veterans Parkway is a project that will plant trees and add other enhancements to the area from Veteran Avenue to Sepulveda Boulevard, encompassing both sides of Wilshire Boulevard, the cemetery frontage and the frontage of the Federal Building, and extending north to include the perimeter of the cemetery along Veteran and Sepulveda.

The project includes Wilshire Boulevard, one of the most well traveled streets in the country which serves as one of the major arteries into the fifth district. Improving the appearance and installing safety devices in this portion of Wilshire Boulevard will be of great public benefit to many residents and visitors to this area.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss this project with my office, please contact Yolanda Hutchinson at (213) 847-4467.

Sincerely,

Michael Feuer
Councilman, Fifth District





BOARD OF SUPERVISORS COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

821 KENNETH HAHN HALL OF ADMINISTRATION
500 WEST TEMPLE STREET / LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012
PHONE (213) 974-3333 / FAX (213) 625-7360
zev@bos.co.la.ca.us / <http://zev.co.la.ca.us>

ZEV YAROSLAVSKY

SUPERVISOR, THIRD DISTRICT

March 16, 2000

Mr. Ronald Kosinski, Chief
Office of Environmental Planning
Department of Transportation, District 7
120 South Spring Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

Dear Mr. Kosinski:

I am writing to express my support of the Veterans Park project and its request to add further improvements and enhancements to your proposed project entitled: "Southbound Route 405 Waterford Street to 0.5km South of Interstate 10 Add Auxiliary Lane and HOV Lane."

Already, the Veterans Parkway project is turning a bleak section of Wilshire Boulevard into a scenic landscaped corridor. For all of those who travel through the Veterans Parkway corridor, additional improvements suggested by Veterans Park to your project would be of great public benefit.

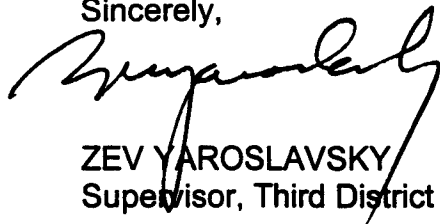
- To improve and clean the infrastructure of the 405 freeway at Sepulveda and Wilshire Boulevards.
- To place all power poles underground from Sepulveda and Wilshire north to the end of the Los Angeles National Cemetery.
- To improve the exterior appearance by adding architectural surface treatments similar to some used in older history bridges that are Los Angeles landmarks.
- To install "historic" street-lighting fixtures with ornamental luminaries, where appropriate.
- To add more pedestrian-oriented lighting at pedestrian sidewalks leading to a through the underpasses.
- To install bollards to improve pedestrian safety.
- To remove standard guardrails and handrails and install historic ornamental of the same at off ramps.
- To install planting to supplement and complement landscaping being added as part of the overall Veterans Parkway plan at all locations.
- Install night lighting ("up lights") to highlight the architectural character of the structures.
- Install landmark signing to announce the "Veterans Parkway".

Mr. Ronald Kosinski
March 16, 2000
Page Two

Enhancing this area will further create a safe urban open space enjoyed by veterans, their families, and citizens who frequent this area. Veterans Park and their ongoing project to enhance the Wilshire corridor have the support from every level of government as well as the private sector. These suggested improvements would benefit everyone to enjoy in the years to come.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Zev Yaroslavsky', written over the printed name and title.

ZEV YAROSLAVSKY
Supervisor, Third District

ZY:mccs

THE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON

March 21, 2000

Mr. Ronald Kosinski, Chief
Office of Environmental Planning
Department of Transportation, District 7
120 South Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Mr. Kosinski:


It has come to my attention that Veterans Park has requested the addition of further improvements and enhancements to your proposed project: "Southbound Route 405 Waterford Street to 0.5 km South of Interstate 10 Add Auxiliary Lane and HOV Lane." We have been pleased with the work done by Veterans Park having worked together on projects to beautify the area in and around the West Los Angeles VA Medical Center (West LA VAMC) and the Los Angeles National Cemetery.

I would support any improvements to the area that are consistent with the existing architectural styles and that will turn this section of Wilshire Boulevard into a scenic landscaped corridor. Without having seen specific plans for this project, I cannot comment on the recommendations. However, the Veterans Park proposal to place power poles underground and to provide for additional landscaping is consistent with past and current projects.

Enhancing this area will further create a safe urban open space that will be of public benefit as well as a fitting remembrance for those who sacrificed so much for our country. Veterans and their families, as well as residents will enjoy the enhanced area in the years to come.

Please let me know if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,



Hershel W. Gober

APPENDIX G

Southern California Association of Governments Approval